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THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

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AUTHOR OF

"Only Country Love," "The Gipsy Peer," "Fickle Fortune," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V.

Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of humankind pass by.

Goldsmith.

To the unsophisticated inhabitants of the little sea coast village the Mildmay of the Park, and the Dodsons of the Cedars, were very great folk indeed, but we have now to do with far greater, with no less a personage and family indeed than the well-known Earl of Lacklands and his children.

A very great man was the Earl of Lackland. His ancestors had fought at Cressy, and at Hastings.

Lackland Hall was an immense place in the Midlands, a grand old house, with famous associations. You could not turn a page of English history without coming directly, or indirectly, upon the deeds and doings of the Lacklands.

It was a question with some politicians whether if by some dreadful chance the house of Lacklands had been extinguished, the history of our country could have been written at all!

There were men who, when they wanted to illustrate the grandeur, the nobility, the importance of England, would point the admiring finger at Lacklands and exclaim:

"There is one type! Look at Lacklands and see epitomised the glory of our land!"

Certainly the Earl of Lackland was a most important individual.

Besides the great Lackland Hall there were also the great mansion in Grosvenor Square, the castle in Scotland, the villa on the banks of the Arno, and the fishing boxes in Ireland and Wales.

The present earl and countess was blessed, in addition to the places of residences above enumerated, with a son and daughter.

The former, Lord Fitz Plantagenet Bosdale, was a

[THE REVELATION.]

young man just passed his majority. Fair-insipid he would have been called had he not been heir to Lackland—somewhat simple minded, certainly not clever, and extremely fond of dress, billiards, his betting-book, and his cigar.

Lady Ethel Bosdale, his sister, presented a marked contrast to him.

She was tall, dark, by no means insipid, and if not positively clever, certainly possessed of the average quantity of brains.

To say in what direction her taste inclined would be perhaps at present rather premature.

It is difficult to analyze a lady's disposition, and probably the reader at some future time might be dissatisfied and inclined to pooh, pooh our opinion of Lady Ethel if we pronounced it thus early. Suffice it to say she was fond of reading, was deeply attached to her brother, and would have been equally so to her parents had they encouraged or even permitted her to be so.

Perhaps such great personages as the Earl and Countess of Lackland were too exalted to possess those emotions of affection and tenderness which fall to the lot of commoner people.

If they did possess them they managed to conceal them with infinite art, and no one could accuse them of the common folly of wearing their hearts upon their sleeves.

Assuredly Lady Ethel must have had a warm heart and a generous nature or the coldness of her exalted parents would have chilled her and rendered her cold likewise.

That she was not the reader will soon perceive. Thousands of persons envied my Lord and Lady Lackland. Never did their carriage roll through the streets, or their names appear in the paper amongst the fashionable intelligence, but hundreds exclaimed:

"I wish I were a Lackland."

But not one of the envious many knew what they were really envying.

There is a skeleton in every house; there was one ever present in all the great and small houses of Lackland. Sometimes he kept discreetly to his cupboard; at others he stepped boldly out and

rattled his bones, and grinned in a manner horrible to see.

Oh, yes, reader, other people besides yourself have a skeleton, and there are some persons unfortunate enough to have two.

If we entered the Grosvenor Square mansion, say on the morning after that memorable little dinner party at Mildmay Park far away in Penraddie, we might perhaps have caught a glimpse of that skeleton starting out of the cupboard.

Lord Lackland was seated at the morocco-lined writing table in his own room, with a few newspapers, a decanter of light wine, and a box of biscuits before him.

One could have seen, even while seated, that he was tall, very thin, very aristocratic looking in face and figure, and somewhat stern.

His enemies said that the great earl was a mere automaton, and was fortunate enough to be actually without feelings.

If he, in common with less exalted personages, did really possess sympathies and antipathies, he certainly had not learnt the art of concealing them.

Tell him that his dearest friend was dead, and he would bow, cast his eyes gravely to the ground, and show no further emotion.

Tell him that the dearest ambition of his life was about to be satisfied, and it is doubtful whether he would have shown his secret exultation.

Birth, death, marriage, fortune, misfortune the earl received with his close-set lips, calm, steady eyes, and unmoved, impassable brow.

Before his presence warm-hearted people would shudder, feel puzzled, and inevitably be embarrassed.

His son looked up to him with puzzled awe. His daughter regarded him with a sad curiosity, almost as calm in its regard as his own cold manner.

The earl was very regular and methodical—rose at the same hour summer and winter, read the papers in his own room, in one or other of his houses; after breakfast rode his tall gray horse in the park, ate his dinner, took his nap, all at

regular, stated periods, and never allowed any one thing to interfere or displace the other.

The morning on which we introduce him to our readers he was seated calmly reading the leaders in one of the morning papers, occasionally looking off to break a biscuit or sip his sherry.

Presently there came the clatter of horses' hoofs down the street, ceased at the door, and as if some one had dismounted, a footstep was presently heard ascending the stairs.

The earl crushed his paper, and in response to a knock, which seemed rather a timid, hesitating one, said:

"Come in."

The door opened, and a young man, no other than Lord Fitz Plantagenet Boisdale, entered.

There was a flush on his fair face, and a look of doubt and distrustful nervousness in his rather simple blue eyes.

"Good morning, sir," he said, holding out his hand.

"Good morning, Fitz," said the earl, extending two fingers and glancing coldly at a chair which stood near the table ready for any visitor on business. "You are ten minutes behind your time."

"I am very sorry, sir," said the boy, for he was little more in years or appearance, "but I'd promised to ride with Ethel this morning, and I forgot it until after I left you, so I went down to the stable to tell Markham to saddle the two bays, and he kept me to talk about that chestnut—"

The earl interrupted what promised to be a lengthy explanatory account with his cold little bow, and glanced at the clock's timepiece on the wall.

"It is of little consequence to me; I am obliged to leave at the half-hour to meet an appointment, therefore I shall only be able to give you the time I promised to give you. You wished to speak to me."

"Yes, sir," said Lord Fitz, looking down at his boots nervously, and then up at the ceiling. "I wanted to ask you if you could let me have a couple of hundred pounds beyond my allowance to—pay a few debts, which—of course I could not help running into while I was in Paris."

Lord Lackland folded his paper methodically, and cleared his throat, preparatory to speaking.

There was not a shadow of annoyance upon his face, only the usual calm, cold gravity.

"I do not think that any one with your liberal allowance should be compelled to run into debt," he said, with icy coldness. "When I made that allowance I stated, if I remember rightly—and you will please correct me if I am wrong—that it was a liberal allowance, that it was by a good deal more than I received at your age, and that I trusted you would keep clear of debt."

"You did, sir," said Lord Fitz, tapping his foot with his riding-whip, and wondering if all father's were so cold and stony-hearted as my Lord Lackland, and whether all sons had to endure that sort of lecture before their fathers bled the required sum.

"Exactly," said the earl. "Then I may be permitted to ask perhaps why you have thought proper to run into debt, seeing that you were aware of the extent of your income, and that I had clearly expressed my intention of limiting it to the amount which I had stated?"

"I—I—don't know," stammered Fitz. "The money seems to go so fast, and there are so many things you must have, and—"

Lord Lackland rose and walked to a bureau, returning to the table with a small pile of bills in his hand.

"These," said he, "are some bills of yours which your tradespeople send to me—why I do not understand. I see among the items a number of things which would not be classed by any reasonable man as necessities. 'Dressing-case with gold tops; four gold bracelets; six diamond hoop rings,' in the jeweller's bill. In the tailor's I see that there are nine coats, to say nothing of trousers, charged in three months. The perfumer's account is extraordinarily extravagant; and this bill, which I presume comes from the hotelkeeper at Richmond, for dinners supplied to the members of various crack corps, and ladies of the ballet, I do not understand at all."

As the papers were inspected one by one, and laid upon the table, the cold, steady eyes were raised and laid, as it were, upon the young man's face.

"There—there are a good many bills out," said Lord Fitz, quite overwhelmed, "but I didn't know they were so heavy, upon my word, sir! I had no idea that that tailor's bill was so big!"

"Exactly," said the earl, coldly. "May I ask if you expect me to pay these?"

"I—I—should be very much obliged if you would, sir," said the young man, plucking up courage and facing his impassable parent. "I mean to be more economical for the future—"

"I think I remember your using that phrase at our last interview," said Lord Lackland, without a

sneer, without a smile or the slightest relaxation of the sternly set muscles.

"I know I've been very careless," said the young man, "and I'll keep my word this time, sir; if you can let me have the two hundred pounds this morning to meet a few pressing claims I shall be very grateful, and I will pay off some of those other bills with my next quarter's allowance."

Lord Lackland walked to the bureau again, and took out a bundle—a very small bundle—of bank-notes; from this he counted out a hundred pounds' worth, and, holding them in his hand, said:

"Here are a hundred pounds; I cannot give you any more, for a very good reason, I cannot afford to do so."

Lord Fitz looked up with a simple stare, which extended his mouth as well as his eyes.

"I cannot afford to do so," said the metallic voice. "It is quite time that you should be placed in possession of the truth as regards my—I may say our—pecuniary position. I ought perhaps to have informed you of the condition of my affairs long earlier, but consideration for your feelings deterred me. Fitz, the estates in London, in Italy, in England, are mortgaged to their fullest extent. The revenue is nearly swallowed up by the interest, and there is so little ready money in the house that if the servants were to demand their wages I should not be in a position to pay them."

Lord Fitz stared pale and aghast.

The skeleton was out grimly walking before him. For the first time Lord Boisdale learned that he was heir to a rich crop of embarrassments, and that the great Earl of Lackland, his father, was a poor man.

"Great Heaven!" he exclaimed. "You don't mean to say that, sir?" unlike his father showing his emotion unmistakably.

"I have said it," replied the earl, "and now you know my—our—real position. Credit, Fitz, has kept our heads above water for a great many years—credit alone. How much longer it may do so I cannot say, but I can estimate if your bills for necessities amount to the sums which they here represent."

"What—what's to be done?" asked Lord Fitz, staring at his calm parent with bewildered horror. "We must sell some of the places, the horses, the diamonds, by jingo!—the—everything."

"We cannot sell what is sold or out of our hands already. You do not understand business matters, unfortunately, or you would at once comprehend that the houses, the land, being mortgaged, and the diamonds at the ahem—pawnbroker's, it is simply impossible to make further money of them."

The young man jumped up and took three paces up and down.

"But," said he, suddenly, and with incredulity upon his face. "I saw my mother wear the diamonds at the last drawing room."

"Not exactly," said the earl, "passe imitations only; the real are in the possession of a pawnbroker. But if you have any taste or inclination for an investigation or examination of our finances, you have my permission to examine the documents which you will find in this case—"

"Great Heaven, no!" said young Lord Fitz. "I don't doubt your word, my lord; I'm only stunned, knocked all of a heap as one may say. It seems so incredible! Why, by jingo, the fellows are always asking me to lend them money—and—saying how rich we are; and you say that—"

"That I cannot afford to let you have the other hundred pounds," said the earl, replacing the bundle in the bureau. While we are upon the subject, which is too painful to be renewed, I will remind you that you are heir to the estate, and that it is in your power to clear it of the encumbrances."

"In mine!" exclaimed Lord Fitz.

"Exactly," said the earl. "By a judicious marriage. You must marry an heiress, Fitz. There are a number of them to be met with; and a great many are extremely anxious to purchase position with their money. I speak plainly because the matter is too serious for mere insinuation. You must marry well, and—ahem—so of course must your sister."

"Ethel," exclaimed the young lord, with a sudden flush; he loved his sister passionately, was very proud of her, and the least suspicion of a slight towards her was sufficient to fire his impetuous young heart and send the blood to his simple face. "What do you mean, sir? That Ethel must marry one of these new men, these snobs with coal mines, or ships, or—that sort of thing; some fellow in trade in fact?"

"It is not necessary that he should be in trade," said the earl, calmly. "But if he possesses the money, whether he gained it by mines, ships or banks matters little. You know the condition of the estate, and you know that it is necessary that you and Ethel should make good marriages; on you both depends the future fortune of the house."

As he spoke he cleared his throat and glanced at the timepiece.

The young lad rose at the hint and took up his hat.

"I won't detain you any longer, sir," he said, "I am very much obliged for—for the money, and of course I'm very sorry to hear such a bad account of the estate."

"Exactly," said the earl, with a cold smile, looking out of the window. "You are riding that bay, I see, and I trust you will take care of it. I had to pay a heavy bill for the mare whose knees you cut last month. Let me beg of you to be careful with the bay."

"Certainly, sir," said Lord Boisdale, and with a very uncomfortable air he left the room.

As he passed into the corridor a sweet, clear voice rose from the hall.

"Fitz, are you coming?"

Fitz smothered a sigh, and as cheerfully as he could replied:

"All right; here I am," and ran down the stairs. In the hall stood Lady Ethel Boisdale.

"How long you have been!" she said, with a smile. "Are you not ashamed to keep a lady waiting? Well, I think brothers imagine they are privileged to take advantage of a sister."

As she spoke her eyes noted the disappointment and embarrassment on his countenance, and when they were mounted and turning out of the square she said:

"What is the matter, Fitz? Will not papa give you the money?"

"No," said Fitz, with an uncomfortable laugh, "no; and supplies an excellent reason for not complying with my modest request. Oh, dear me, I'm very miserable. There! don't ask me what about, because I shan't tell you. It would only worry you, and you're too good a fellow—I mean girl—to be worried. Let's put these lacy animals into something sharper; I hate this squeeze and those streets."

Lady Ethel touched her horse gently, and in silence they cantered into the park.

Then she spoke again, in a low, kind voice, which her brother loved to hear.

"Fitz, about that money?"

"Well?" he said.

"If you want it very badly—very, you know—I think I have a little—not so much as two hundred pounds, of course, but a little—and you shall have it if you like."

"I dare say!" said Lord Fitz, indignantly. "It's likely I'll rob you of the few miserable pounds you've saved out of the paltry allowance they dole out to you! Why, it isn't one quarter enough as it is! I'm half inclined to be angry with you! Take your money, indeed!"

"Nonsense," said Ethel, "you're a dear, stupid boy, Fitz. It's true my allowance is not imperial, but I make it do."

"Exactly," said Lord Fitz, ruefully, "as the governor would say! If he said exactly once this morning he said it a dozen times—but that's just it! You make your miserable pocket-money do, and I spend mine, which is three times as much, before I get it. Ethel, some of our fellows say I'm half a fool, and upon my word I think they're right!"

"Upon my word I think your fellows, as you call them, are pretty impudent! But about the money, Fitz dear! Why wouldn't papa give it you?"

"Don't ask me," growled Lord Fitz. "I can't tell you! Oh, what an awful sham life is. I tell you what it is, Ethel, we're all of us a gigantic awindle! It's a tremendous sham. Look at the earl! Look how people bow down to him! Do you remember at the drawing-room last week how they cleared out of the way when he came in? And to think that it's all a mockery and a delusion, and that we're—But there! I'm telling you all about it, and I don't mean to! Don't ask me anything about it, there's a good girl! You'll know all in good time, I dare say; perhaps when they want to sell you to some colonial snob."

"Look," said Ethel, gently interrupting him; "who is that lifting his hat?"

"Eh? where?" said Lord Fitz. "Oh, it's Bertie Fairfax and Leicester Dodson—capital fellow, Bertie. Let's pull up a minute, Ethel."

And with a smile of welcome he steered his horse near the rails, upon which the two gentlemen who had raised their hats were leaning.

One of them, Leicester Dodson, we know, the other was a tall, splendidly built fellow, with a frank, genial face, and a noble yet peculiarly free and graceful bearing.

"Hallo, Bertie! Good morning, Mr. Dodson. Delighted to see you. Ethel, you will let me introduce my friends, Mr. Dodson, Mr. Bertie Fairfax. Bertie, Mr. Dodson, this is my sister, Lady Ethel Boisdale."

Both the gentlemen raised their hats; Lady Ethel bent her beautiful head with her rare smile.

She always liked to know any friends of her brother whom he chose to introduce, for with all his simplicity he was too wise to fall into the mis-

take of showing her any but the most unexceptionable of them.

Bertie Fairfax looked up at the lady and then at the horse. He was a connoisseur of both.

"It is a beautiful day," he said, opening the conversation with the usual weatherwise remark.

"Your horse looks as if he enjoyed it."

"Which he does," said Ethel. "I am sure I do. It is delightful—walking or riding."

"I should prefer the latter," said Bertie Fairfax, "but my horse is lame temporarily and I am compelled to pedestrianize."

"What a pity," said Ethel, adding, with her sweet smile, "Perhaps the change will be good for you."

Bertie Fairfax looked up at her with his frank eyes to see if she was quizzing him, then laughed musically.

"Perhaps he thought so and tumbled down on purpose. It doesn't much matter—I like walking, but not here; I like more room. My friend, Mr. Dodson, however, insisted upon this promenade."

He is an observer of human nature—a cynic, I regret to say—and finds material for bitter and scornful reflection in the gay and thoughtless crowd."

He laughed again.

Ethel could not but smile and glance at the cynic, who was walking with her brother and seemingly quite unconscious of his friend's personal denunciation.

"And you are not a cynic," said Ethel, "and therefore do not care for the gay and thoughtless crowd. Are you fond of solitude?"

"Yes, with some one to share it," promptly replied Mr. Fairfax. "I'm fond of everything, Lady Boisdale. I enjoy life and laugh with the gay and thoughtless." And he did so then.

"It is to be hoped that Mr. Dodson laughs also sometimes," said Ethel.

"Oh, yes, he makes haste to laugh that he may not have to weep—or he says so," replied Bertie Fairfax. "Are you going to Lady Darefield's ball to-night?"

"Yes," said Ethel. "I presume you also, by your question, are going?"

"Yes," said Bertie Fairfax. "I am glad to say."

Five minutes before he had sworn to Mr. Leicester Dodson that he wouldn't go to Lady Darefield's ball for five hundred pounds, and five hundred pounds were of some consequence to Mr. Bertie Fairfax.

"It is very hot for balls, but one must do his duty. I hope I may be able to persuade you to give me a dance?"

"I don't know," said Ethel, with a smile.

At that moment her horse walked on a little. Mr. Fairfax moved farther up the rail, and then conversation, no more confidential than that we have already given, continued until Lord Fitz was heard to exclaim "Good-bye," and then joined his sister.

Both the gentlemen on foot raised their hats, Bertie Fairfax with his cordial, pleasant smile, Leicester Dodson with his grave and also pleasant grace, and after a return of the salutations the four young people parted.

"Well," said Lord Fitz, from whose mind the recent meeting had expunged the unpleasant remembrances of his morning interview, "what do you think of them?"

Ethel was silent for a moment.

"I don't know which was the handsomer," she said, thoughtfully.

"That's just like you women, Eth; you always think of the Graces first."

"Well," said Ethel, "there was no time to know anything more about them. I think Mr. Fairfax is very pleasant—he has a nice voice and such frank eyes. There are some men with whom you feel friendly in the first ten minutes; he is one of them."

"You're right," said Lord Fitz. "Bertie's the jolliest and dearest old fellow going. Poor old Bert!"

"Why poor?" said Ethel.

"Because he is poor, deuced poor," said Lord Fitz, muttering under his breath, with a sigh, "like some more of us."

"How do you mean?" said Ethel.

"Well," said Lord Fitz, "he has to work for his living. He's a barrister or something of that sort. But he writes and draws things for books, you know. I don't quite understand. He can sing like a nightingale and tell a story better than any man I know."

"He looks very happy," said Ethel, "although he is poor."

"Happy!" said Lord Fitz. "He's always happy. He's the best company going."

"And who is his friend? Mr. Dodson, is not his name?" asked Ethel.

"Yes, Leicester Dodson," said Lord Fitz. "He's one of your clever men. You can't understand whether he's serious or joking sometimes, and I've often thought he was making fun of me, only—"

"Only what?" asked his sister.

"Only I didn't think he'd have the impudence," said Lord Fitz, proudly. "It isn't nice to be sneered at by a tall chandler."

"A what?" said Ethel.

"Well, the son of a tall chandler. That's what his father was. A nice, quiet old boy. Haven't you heard of 'em? They live at Penriddle, which is about nine miles from that shooting-box in Herefordshire—Coombe Lodge."

"So near," said Ethel. "No, I have not heard of him. He looks to be a gentleman, but I did not notice him very much. I like his friend's face best, yes, I am sure I do, though both the faces were nice."

"You don't take into account Leicester Dodson's coin," said Lord Fitz. "His people are immensely rich; tall turns into gold you know if you only melt it long enough."

"That's a joke or a pun, Fitz," laughed Lady Ethel. "And really rather clever for you. And where does Mr. Fairfax live?"

"Oh! in chambers in the Temple—quite the clever bachelor, you know. Very snug they are too, much more comfortable than any of the places. He gives good dinners sometimes—when he's in luck as he calls it. Eth, you ought to have been a man, then you could have known some jolly good fellows."

"Thank you. If I were not on horseback I'd court you," said Ethel. "Can't I know good fellows as I am?"

"No," said simple Lord Fitz. "You can't! They won't let you, it's dangerous. You must only know men with long handles to their name like ours, and with their pockets full of money—unlike ours. You mustn't know Bertie Fairfax, for instance. The mother wouldn't allow it."

At that moment Ethel's horse started—his rider had, in reality, touched him with a spur—and got in front of Lord Fitz, so that the blush which suddenly crimsoned Ethel's beautiful face was hidden from her brother's light blue eyes.

Now why should Lady Ethel Boisdale blush at the simple little speech of Lord Fitz? It could be of little consequence to her, surely, if her eyes were fastened never to rest on Mr. Bertie Fairfax again. Why did she blush, and why, during the remainder of that park gallop, did she look forward to Lady Darefield's little ball?

"Well," said Leicester, as the two equestrians rode away and left the pedestrian looking after them, "what do you think of the Lady Ethel Boisdale? You have been wrapped in a silence unusual and remarkable for the last three minutes; unusual because on such occasions as the present you generally indulge in a rhapsody of admiration, or a deluge of candid abuse, extraordinary because silence at any time is extraordinary in you."

"Hold your tongue, you cynical fellow," exclaimed Bertie, still looking after the brother and sister. "So that is the sister of whom simple Fitz is always talking—Lady Ethel! A pretty name, and it suits her. An Ethel should be dark, or at least brown shadowed; an Ethel should have deep, thoughtful eyes, a pleasant, rather dreamy smile, and a touch of hauteur over face, figure, and voice. She has all these—"

"And fifty more virtues, attributes, and peculiarities which your confounded imagination can endow her with! Nonsense! She's a nice-looking girl, with a sensible face, and the pride proper for her station. You can't make anything more of her."

"Can't I?" said his friend; "you can't, you mean. I call her beautiful. She is going to Lady Darefield's ball to-night: I—I shall go after all, I think, Leicester."

"I thought so," said Leicester Dodson, with a smile of ineffable wisdom and sagacity. "I thought somebody said they wouldn't go to the confounded ball for five hundred pounds, and that the same somebody was plying me for having promised to grace it with my presence."

"I thought you'd die if I didn't keep you company, and so, as I like to borrow your money, and don't want you to die, I'll go. I say, Leicester, haven't the Lacklands a small place in Herefordshire near you? What do they call it—Coombe Lodge?"

"Perhaps they have," said Mr. Leicester. "I believe that there are few counties which are not honoured by the Lacklands in that way. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, merely for idle curiosity."

"Hem! you promised to come and spend a week or two with me," said Mr. Leicester. "Will you come?"

"Oh, chaff away," said Bertie Fairfax, good-temperedly. "But I'll take you seriously; I will come."

"Done," said Leicester, still chaffing as his light-hearted friend called it. "I'm going down next week. Come with me!"

"Thanks," said Bertie. "I'll think it over. I'll come and cut you out with the Mildmay heiress! Hah! hah!"

He laughed as Leicester turned to him with a look of mild surprise.

"You didn't know that I was posted up in that intelligence! I've a dozen little birds who bring me news night and morning, and I've heard—"

"Pshaw!" interrupted Leicester. "I've dined with mamma and papa at Mildmay Park, and that—that's positively all. My dear Bertie, I am not a marrying man; now you are, but, mark me, Lady Ethel Boisdale is not meant for you."

"Thank you," said Bertie, "I'm very much obliged, but who said that she was?"

And with a light laugh the subject was dropped.

That night when Lady Ethel Boisdale entered the magnificent saloons of Lady Darefield's mansion in Park Place she looked round the room with calm, yet expectant eyes, and dropped them very suddenly as they met the also searching and expectant gaze of Mr. Bertie Fairfax.

It is one thing to exchange glances and smiles with a belle in a ball-room, but quite another matter to get a dance with her.

The saloons were crowded by the best of the land, eligible parties were in abundance, and Mr. Bertie Fairfax, handsome, sweet-natured and lovable though he was, found himself somewhat out in the cold.

It was not an unusual position for him, and on other occasions he had laughed good-naturedly in the smoking-room of his club, saying that there had been too many iron pithers going down the stream for such a fragile, unsatisfactory self affair as himself to hope for success.

But to-night it was different.

He wanted to dance with Lady Ethel Boisdale; why he could scarcely have told.

She was very beautiful; but he had seen faces far more lovely even than hers; she was very graceful, tall and full of a sweet, proud dignity, but; Bertie Fairfax had seen some of the ladies of the Papal court, and remembered their faces.

She was, as it happened, just the realization of the young fellow's ideal, and—yet it must be written—he was already half in love with her.

Round her, forming a sort of body guard or watch dog, continually hovered in majestic grace the Countess of Lackland, her mamma.

Bertie was aware that her ladyship knew all about him, and that it was utterly vain to hope that he might be allowed to fill a vacant line in the Lady Ethel's little dancing programme.

He watched her dancing for some time, watched her as she span round in two waltzes with Leicester Dodson for her partner, then the disappointed Bertie made his way out on to the corridor and leant against the balustrade, gnawing his tawny moustache and trying to make up his mind to go to his club.

Just then, as he had almost decided, Leicester Dodson came out, hot and flushed, but with his usual grave reserve about his mouth and eyes.

"Ah! Bert!" he said. "Taking a cooler; you're wise in your generation. They ought to keep a weighing machine outside in the lobbies, so that a man could see how much he'd fined down after each dance. I've lost pounds since the Lansers. It's hotter than a siesta hour in Madrid. You look cool."

"I don't feel particularly hot. I haven't been dancing. I feel like the skeleton at the feast; I think I shall carry my bones to the club. Will you come?"

"I'm engaged for another turn with Lady Ethel Boisdale," said Leicester Dodson, leaning over the balustrade and skillfully concealing a yawn.

"Lucky dog," said Bertie, enviously.

"Eh?" said Leicester. "By the way, you said she'd half promised you a dance; you don't mean to say you haven't called for payment, Bert; she's the best-looking woman in the room, and the most sensible—"

"Too sensible to dance with Mr. Fairfax, or her mamma has had all her training trouble for nothing," said Bertie.

"Nonsense! She's looking this way; go and ask her, man. I'll wait until the waltz is over, then we'll go on to the club, for, between you and me and that hideous statue, which is all out of drawing by the way, I have had pretty well enough; and you seem, to judge by your face, to have had a great deal too much."

Bertie without a word left his friend, fought his way through the crowd, and, after some manoeuvring, gained Lady Ethel's side.

"Have you saved me that dance which you half promised me this morning?" he said.

Lady Ethel turned—she did not know that he was so near—and a smile, bright but transient, passed across her face.

"There is one dance—it is only a quadrille," she said, "all the waltzes are gone."

"I am grateful for the quadrille only, and do not deserve that," he said.

"I thought you had gone," said Ethel. "My brother was looking for you just now, and I told him that I had seen you go out."

"I was in the corridor cooling," said Bertie Fairfax.

"Is it cool there?" she asked; "I thought it could not be cool anywhere to-night."

Then Lord Fitz came up, his simple face all flushed with the heat and the last dance.

"Hullo, Bert, I've been looking for you. I say—"

"You must tell me when the dance is over," said Bertie, "there is no time."

And he led his partner to her place in a set.

A quadrille has the advantage over its more popular sister, the waltz; it allows of conversation.

Bertie could talk well; he had always something light and pleasant to say, and he had a musical voice in which to say it.

He was generally too indolent to talk much, but neither his natural laziness nor the heat seemed to weigh upon him to-night, and he talked about this matter and on that until Ethel, who was not only beautiful but cultivated, was delighted.

Too delighted, perhaps for my Lady Lackland, from her place of espionage in a corner, put up her eye-glass and scanned her daughter's rapt and sometimes smiling face with something that was not altogether a pleased expression.

"Who is that good-looking young fellow with whom Ethel is dancing?" she asked of the dowager Lady Barnwell, a noted scandal-monger, and an authority on every one's position and eligibilities.

"That is young Fairfax. Handsome, is he not? Pity he's so poor."

"Poor, is he?" said the countess, grimly.

"Oh, yes, dreadfully. Works for his living, a writer, artist, or something of that sort. Really I don't know exactly. He is in the Temple. Very amusing companion evidently. Lady Ethel looks charmed with her partner."

"Yes," said Lady Lackland, coldly, and in her heart of heart she determined that her daughter should receive a lecture upon the imprudence of wasting a dance upon such doubtful and dangerous men as Bertie Fairfax.

Meanwhile Ethel was enjoying herself, and when Bertie, whose handsome face was beaming with quiet satisfaction and pleasure, softly suggested that they should try the corridor, Lady Ethel, after a moment's hesitation, on the score of prudence, replied with an affirmative, and they sought the lobby.

Here there were a seat for the lady and a leaning-post for Mr. Fairfax, and the conversation which had been interrupted was taken up again.

Bertie was in the midst of an eloquent defence of a favourite artist, of whom Lady Ethel did not quite approve, when Lord Fitz again appeared.

"What an owl you are, Bert! I've been everywhere for you. I say, we're going down to Combe Lodge; it's so beastly hot up here in town, and we're going to make a little summer picnic party; you know, just a nice number. Cecil Carlton, Leonard Waltham and his sister, and two or three more. My sister is going, ain't you, Ethel? Will you come?"

"Thanks," said Bertie, with something like a flush, and certainly a sparkle in his light eyes.

"But I am booked to Leicester Dodson."

"Oh, yes, the Cedars; what a bore for us. Never mind, the Lodge isn't far off, and, if you go down, we shall all be together."

"Yes," said Bertie, glancing at the fair face beneath him, which was turned with a quiet look of interest to her brother, "yes. When do you go?"

"Next week, if Ethel can get herself away from this sort of thing."

"I shall be very glad to go," said Ethel, "I am longing for the green trees and a little country air."

"It's done then; all the odds taken," said simple Lord Fitz.

At that moment came up Ethel's next partner.

Bertie relinquished her with a smothered sigh. He knew that he should not see her again, that night, for her programme was full.

"We may meet in a country lane next week," he said, softly.

"We may," she said, with a smile that parted her lips bewitchingly, and then she was called away.

Bertie looked after her, then slowly descended the broad stairs, got his crush hat and strolled into the open street.

"That's the most sensible thing you've done for the last two hours," said Leicester Dodson's voice, behind him. "I'll follow your example," and he took out his cigar case. "Here, my man," he added, as his next brougham drove up.

"Let us walk," said Bertie.

And they started slowly for the club.

It was very hot there, however, and the pair were soon in Leicester's chambers, which were in the same inn and only one floor below Bertie's.

Leicester Dodson was a wealthy man, and quite able to afford luxurious apartments in the Albany, or at Meurice's, but he preferred a quiet set of chambers near those of his fast friend, Bertie.

He did not work in them, but he read a great deal, and he enjoyed half an hour now and then spent in watching his hard-working friend.

He would sit in Bertie's arm-chair, with his legs extended before him, watching Bertie engaged on some article or poem or drawing and as he watched would almost wish that he also had to work for his living.

So Mr. Leicester was somewhat of a philosopher and a cynic, as Bertie had said, and at times found life rather wearisome.

To-night he drew himself a chair—Bertie was extended upon an ancient but comfortable sofa and, lighting a fresh cigar, rang for claret and ice.

"Dreadfully hot, Bert. What on earth makes us hang about this horrible town in this terrible weather? Fancy staying in London when all the green fields are holding out their hands and shouting 'Come and roll on us'! Fashion is a wonderful thing—so are you. Why on earth don't you speak? I never knew you so silent for so many minutes together in my life. Are you asleep?"

"No," said Bertie. "Push the claret across the table with the poker, will you? When did you say you were going down to the Cedars, Les?"

"When you like," said Leicester Dodson, colouring slightly, and turning his face away from his companion. "To-morrow if you like; I was going to say I wish I'd never left it, but I came up this week because—"

"Because what?" asked Bertie, as he stopped.

"Because," said Leicester Dodson, looking hard at the fire in his grave, sedate way, "discretion is the better part of valour."

"What on earth do you mean?" exclaimed Bertie Fairfax. "You never mean to tell me you were afraid of a man?"

"No," said Leicester, with his cynical smile. "Of a woman. There, don't ask me any more. I am not going to make a fool of myself, Bert, but while we're on the subject I'll say that it would never do for either of us to do that."

"No," said Bertie Fairfax, with an unusual bitterness. "We can never marry, Les. You because you are too—"

"Selfish," interrupted Mr. Dodson, placidly.

"And I because I am too poor—"

"You will be rich enough some day, you clever dog," said Mr. Dodson, sententiously.

"Yes, when I'm an old man, gray-headed and bent double. Never mind."

"I won't. Don't you either," said Leicester.

"And now for the Cedars. Suppose we say the end of the week?"

"Yes, that will do," said Bertie. "The Lacklands—at least some of them—are going down to Combe Lodge next week."

"Oh," said Leicester, significantly, glancing at the frank, pleasant face of his friend.

"Yes," retorted Bertie, "and the Mildmays are still at the Park, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Leicester, shrugging his shoulders with an air of indifference he was far from feeling. "So that we shall be altogether—like moths round a candle," he added, cynically, as Bertie rose, with a yawn to mount to his own chambers.

Yes, altogether, and near the meshes of that web which a skilful, cunning spider was weaving for them.

Captain Murpoint had laid his delicate web ready for his flies.

(To be continued.)

THE gigantic clock exhibited by Mr. Benson at the Exhibition of 1862 has been purchased for St. James's Cathedral in Toronto.

LENT.—If the Carnival be disappearing, Lenten observances are becoming softened. We are a long way from the time of the First Christians, who only partook of one meal, and that after sunset, during carême; in 1595 in France, and during the reign of that merry monarch Henri IV., whoever ate meat during Lent received corporal punishment, and the butcher who sold it was condemned to death; what severities from a converted Huguenot! Zeal has been said, however, to be fit for wise men, while flourishing chiefly among fools. Lent now-a-days is less severe.

SAGACITY OF THE PARTRIDGE.—Instances of the sagacity of the partridge, woodcock, and other birds have often been related. But the most singular illustration of the deception practised by the first of those wily species to protect their young is given by Mr. Henshaw.

While riding through pine woods, a brood of partridges, containing the mother and eight or ten young of about a week old, was come upon so suddenly that the feet of the foremost mule almost trod on them. The young rose, flew a few yards, and dropping down, were in an instant hid in the underbrush. The mother meanwhile began some very peculiar tactics. Rising up, she fell back again to the ground as if perfectly helpless, and imitated the actions of a wounded bird so successfully that for

a moment it was thought she had really been trodden upon. Several of the men, completely deceived, attempted to catch her, but she fluttered away, keeping just out of reach of their hands until they had been enticed ten or twelve yards off, when she rose and was off like a bullet. Her tactics had successfully covered the retreat of her young.

AN AFTER-DINNER SPEECH.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm something unhappy. I heard such abuse, to-day, of an innocent word, it roused all the wrath of the mildest of men.

To a height as colossal, I fancy, as when a former occasion provoked the inquiry in the mind of the Mantuan, "Tantumne iras?"

You'll say there was reason—I'll state you the case:

There's a boy in my house in whose handsomeish face

Are features from which one may easily gather He is fairly entitled to call me his father.

A youngster of thirty, as yet rather slim, But of excellent promise in stature and limb.

Well—to tell you the story—a sassy young boor Of Johnny's acquaintance came up to the door, And, ringing the bell in a violent way,

Sent up the Hibernian maiden to say That a gentleman wanted, a moment, to see

"Mister"—(adding the surname belonging to me). "Bid him come to my study!" I civilly said.

In a minute or so Maggie popped in her head; "It was not for yourself, sure, the fellow does ax:

He said it was young and not old Mister S—, He wanted to see!" And am I to be told

By a blundering booby that I—I am old? The word, I'm aware is by no means a new one,

And for people of eighty no doubt is the true one; What incensed my soul to such fierce indignation,

Was it's very improper, absurd application! Is he old who can climb to the highest of stiles,

And never complain of fatigue or "rheumatism?" Is he old who, in spite of his fast thinning curls,

Has a joke for the boys and a smile for the girls? Is he old whom fair women—(No! not the dures)

Of prison or torture shall make me confess! Is he old who owes nothing to fraudulent art?

Above all, is he old who is young at the heart? I rather think not! But, quærens? Who knows?

The bud of last evening-to-day is a rose? And roses will fade; and in like manner, when

We jolly young fellows grow middle-aged men Perhaps the Good Father (tho' surely were kind)

Makes us to our fallings conveniently blind. "Know yourself!" said the Grecian. A difficult task,

And rather too much of a mortal to ask; We all know the name of the fellow who peened it.

And how he asserted "a conde descendit!" "Know yourself!" It is well; but for my part, my brothers,

I would rather extend my acquaintance with others, As promising, surely, a better return

Than aught of myself I could possibly learn! To learn human nature is truly an art,

And many imagine they've got it by heart, Because they are keen at detecting offences, Base motives, sly vices, and shallow pretences;

Let us study, the rather, to find out the merit The faultiest neighbour may chance to inherit;

To publish the virtue that's misunderstood. And always and everywhere seek for the good.

There was one, "Paddy Goldsmith," an author of note, (And who has not read what "poor Oliver" wrote?)

A scholar, philosopher, writer of plays, And a poet who still wears the freshest of bays—

Every dandy in town, every chambermaid Moll, Could tell of his blunders and laugh at poor

"Noll!" Every coxcomb could see he was homely and rough, And of follies and foibles had more than enough!

But it took the profoundest of sages to scan The learning and genius that lay in the man!

Sam Johnson could see, and was bold to declare, There was spirit and humour and poetry there;

And to poets who might sneer, he had over this answer, "You may laugh as you will, sir! and say what you can sir;

He's a genuine wit and a wonderful man, sir!"

C. G. S.

"ORACULATES" is the most recent contribution to the English vocabulary. It is not a bad word, and we shall assist in introducing it. The member of Parliament who "oraculates" will have due attention.



[THE WITCH OF DOMREMY.]

THE MARTYRED HEROINE.

CHAPTER I.

But to the hero, when his sword

Has won the battle for the free,

Death's voice sounds like some prophet's word,

And in his hollow tones are heard

The thanks of millions yet to be. Hallel.

THERE were dancing and merry-making upon the village green of the little French town of Domremy one bright spring morning.

Bearded gallants, rustic youths clad in their holiday attire, suits of blue and buff; smart, pretty village maids, in gay bodices and skirt, with tiny slippers and jaunty headdresses covering black, brown, or golden locks, trod merrily over the velvet sward to the sound of the gay flute and violin played by old Auguste Vaseur and Francois Brandit, two musicians of the village.

There were many peasant beauties assembled there that spring morning; and bright were the jaunty costumes; and as the music waxed faster the tripping feet twinkled lightly over the turf in whirling measures; while old Auguste cried out sharply, at the same time giving a new turn to the waltz:

"Hither comes old Dame Dourell, with her shambling steps and cracked voice! Ah! 'tis an old raven she is, always hovering upon the field. Dance, mes gars! mes filles! dance merrily! or she'll chill ye all with her croakings!"

The young men, in obedience to this command, caught their fair partners round their yielding, bodiced waists; and, as the music quickened, whirled into the giddy measures of the waltz; and all went circling round and round, with palpitating hearts and quickened breath, till hearts, lips, and eyes were flushed with the intoxicating motion.

And still that strange, outé figure advanced—at first seen away in the distance upon the road leading to the town, like a bird of ill-omen, and then nearer still nearer, till it paused upon the outer edge of the green, near two who were standing under the shade of an old elm tree, and who had not yet mingled with the gay revellers. And this strange, weird being bore the cognomen of Dame Dourell, Witch, Fortune-teller and Soothsayer of Domremy.

The figure was bent, and appraised in an old serge garment of faded black. Her features were sharp, and her countenance sullen and wrinkled; but her black eyes were keen and penetrating, and had carried a tremor of fear to the bosoms of many a peasant youth who had sought Dame Dourell with the desire that she would unfold the future to their gaze.

In her withered right hand she carried a staff, which she clasped tightly for support with the thin, bony fingers as she paused to rest, and glanced for a moment upon the group of merry dancers; then she turned her gaze away till it rested upon the young girls under the shelter of the old elm.

Both of these girls were tall and slender and both were possessed of loveliness in no ordinary degree. Little wonder was it that old Dame Dourell's eyes lighted up with a quick flush of pleasure as she gazed upon them.

One had a tinge of auburn on her thick hair, which waved around her white forehead and blue eyes in shining masses, then was wreathed in a heavy coil at the back of her shapely head and held by a silver comb of rare and dainty workmanship.

In the tresses of the other was held the hue of the rich Tuscan grape, and the purplish-black masses fell in natural curls around the shoulders and white throat of the girl. Her eyes were large, slumberous and brown, with fringes of silken softness and great length resting upon the full, rounded cheek. Her features were delicate and clearly cut and the face and figure were those of a sweet young maiden of delicate organization and refinement.

The two were cousins. They were similar in form and somewhat so in feature; but in complexion and expression totally diverse, and very unlike any of the gay company of dancers present. Marie Laxart—she of the auburn hair, was sunny as the smile of the morning in her beauty. She was robed in a tunic of blue satin, edged at the bottom of the short skirt with a rich, heavy lace. A delicate salmon-coloured bodice of the same fabric, laced at the front and back with golden-coloured cord and tassels, covered the perfect bust of the girl. A tri-cornered blue head-dress, edged with white lace, was fastened jauntily over the thick hair and dainty kid slippers, laced with buff over the white, clocked socks which covered the arching instep, encased her small feet. Long white lace mitts covered the soft arms and slender hands.

This was Marie Laxart—the city cousin of Joan d'Arc—who had come down from Petit Burey to make a visit to Joan, and had brought all her holiday dresses from her more aristocratic home, with which to astonish and conquer the hearts of the village beaux of Domremy; for, notwithstanding she was a sweet, pure maid, yet there was a spice of coquetry in Mary's nature, which she innocently manifested in the bewitching costumes she had adopted, and the bright glances bestowed upon the village youths from her sparkling eyes.

There was a striking contrast in the attire of the

two cousins. While Marie Laxart was decked in rich, fashionable apparel, setting off her sunny beauty to advantage, Joan d'Arc, even more lovely than her gay citizen cousin, wore only a tunic and a bodice of a soft gray material, with a single white rose nestling amid the changing hues of her curling tresses.

This rose Marie had plucked off a vine running over the cottage door, and had playfully insisted upon placing it in Joan's hair; at the same time chiding her cousin for not wearing one of her more fanciful dresses, for that day, at least. But Joan only shook her head in reply, saying:

"I have heart for no such deckings; the dress I wear is best suited to my fancy."

And pure, lovely Joan d'Arc, standing beside her beautiful cousin, with not yet the full bloom of seventeen summers upon her smooth white brow, was even more fair than Marie in her sweet, lily-like beauty.

Joan noted old Dame Dourell's eyes fastened upon upon herself and cousin, after the woman had paused near them.

"Good-morrow to you, Mother Dourell! This is my cousin Marie Laxart, from Petit Burey; and I crave your benison upon her."

"Ay, good-morrow to you, sweet Joan—and you, too, pretty Marie Laxart!" said the dame. "Sweet pleasure to you both to-day; and a merry turn at dancing!" she added.

The girls both acknowledged this remark; then Marie exclaimed, as she turned again in the direction of the dancers:

"Hither comes your brother Pierre, ma chère Joan, and a noble, handsome youth with him. Who can it be? Look! is he not a charming gallant?" And she caught at her cousin's sleeve as a tall, handsome young man advanced toward them, accompanied by Pierre d'Arc, brother of Joan. "What a brilliant face and splendid form, Joan! and they are coming directly to us. Now for a conquest; for I've been waiting this half-hour to find one I thought worthy my preference!" cried the gay maid, half-jestingly, as the two young men drew nigh.

"Good-morrow, Cousin Pierre!" Marie exclaimed as her cousin stepped before her. "It is full half an hour since you left us beneath this old, spreading elm; and, notwithstanding I absolutely refused to dance with you, I have since been forced to a rueful regret of my words, for Joan here has been so absorbed in reverie that I could seldom get a word from her rosebud lips; for I know, for a certainty, that she has been blind to half the admiring glances that have been sent under this elm tree since you went away."

"Well I am right if you have found cause to repent your decision, ma belle cousine," said Pierre. "And since you and Joan could not be prevailed upon to dance, I thought 'twas time to leave the waltz and come to you; especially as my friend Paul Alluf, spying Joan and you, and fearing to come alone, begged me to accompany him hither, and bestow on him an introduction to my beautiful cousin."

Joan d'Aro had greeted Paul Alluf while her brother was speaking.

Raising her dark eyes, she extended her hand, and said:

"You are welcome, Paul. We came to see the merry-making, but had no heart to join when France is in such peril, and so could not take pleasure in the dance; yet Marie perhaps will join you now," she added, as that young girl acknowledged the introduction to the young man by a cordial, smiling greeting.

"Nay, nay, Joan! Go yourself!" said Marie, in quick tones, "twere better you than I should dance with him."

At this moment, before Joan could again reply they were startled by the voice of old Dame Dourell who still stood by; and, overhearing their conversation, now cried out, in shrill, prophetic tones, looking at Joan, and pointing her long, thin fingers towards her as she spoke:

"The lass says right. She must not dance when her beloved France is in danger! For Joan d'Aro was born for a different fortune than to trip her pretty feet to the sound of a waltzing measure! For her, will the trumpet of war and the bugle and sife of victorious battles be sounded! For her, men, and women and children will sing songs of praise and adoration; and by her will the realm be saved and France again rise triumphant amid the nations of the earth. But she, alas, will fall a-stricken, tender lamb, sacrificed into the hands of the ravaging foe; and none will put forth a hand to save her from her fate!"

The old dame uttered this with a fixed look upon Joan, and her long forefinger pointed towards her while her figure swayed back and forth with the energy she had called into existence. Before any of this startled group had time to reply, she continued again, this time looking at Marie and addressing her:

"Yes, fair Marie Laxart, join the dancers with this young man, who to-day looks upon thy cousin with eyes soft and tender. For thou wilt grow to fill a longing which Joan could never do, even did she escape the dark doom I see awaiting her at the end of her path of glory. The maid's heart is too pure for such earthly affections as he would crave. In Heaven alone will she find peace and rest fitted to one of her mould. In Heaven, where all is peace and joy for evermore."

"Art telling fortunes, granddame?" cried a score or more of merry voices, as the little group was surrounded by those who had finished their dance. "If so, tell us all what shall betide us through the day, and in our coming lives. Which of all the company will be first wedded?" said one youth in merry tones, looking archly at the blushing face of the pretty peasant lass beside him, whom he held fast by the hand as he proffered his request.

"I came not amid ye this morn to tell ye of your loves or your hates!" exclaimed the old dame. "Neither to bide the time when ye marry those you choose. But I tell ye all there is one among ye this pleasant morn who will never see bridal, though a good stout heart worships even the ground her little feet tread upon! That one will walk with lords and ladies; will sit beside the king, and battle beside brave generals and yet she will remain pure as she is now. I tell ye!" she proceeded, again pointing to where Joan d'Aro stood, and raising her voice as she went on, "I tell ye, there is one here who will save her beloved France from the doom which now hangs over her! 'Vive la France! Vive le Roi Charles! Vive la Joan d'Aro!' will be the cry ere yet two twelvemonths have sped away!" she uttered in a shrill, prophetic voice; and then, waving her hand toward the pale, trembling Joan, then looking up to heaven, the old dame took up her staff and hobbled away.

For a little while there fell a silence and awe upon those remaining; then, as it grew irksome, the gay-voiced Marie exclaimed with a forced laugh, shrugging her shoulders the while:

"Oh, ma chère cousine Joan, she is a witch, and has come nigh frightening us all out of our seven senses. She is half-crazed too or she would never think of uttering such horrible things about you and France. Ugh! it makes one nervous to think of her, Joan; and I don't believe a word she said either. But come, Monsieur Paul Alluf, we must not let the day fly by thus, with a dark cloud, begun in the morning, left to spread over the hours that should be sunny. Lead on to the dance! My feet are tired of standing still!"

"Yes, yes, we will go! but I must speak with Joan first!" said the young man. "See how pale she has grown!" he added, in a low tone, to Marie.

Then, approaching nearer Joan, he said:

"Do not be nervous at the old dame's words, Joan. She is, I dare swear, more than usually crazed this morning; and has but got up this wild saying to frighten our merry-making away to-day."

"I am not alarmed, Paul. Go thou with Marie, and join the dancers, and do not fear that I shall grieve at Dame Dourell's words," replied Joan.

"Music, music!" called the young men; and as the two old musicians again took up their instruments, and the strains went out upon the morning air, the dance was formed anew—gay, vivacious Marie Laxart and Paul Alluf leading the set, followed by Pierre d'Aro with a sparkling brunette beauty upon his arm.

And while the festive scene was going on the maid, Joan d'Aro, when unobserved, drew silently apart from the crowd which had at first surrounded her, and wandered her way back to her father's cottage.

CHAPTER II.

THE shades of evening were falling on the little village of Domremy when Marie Laxart, attended by Paul Alluf, turned into the gateway leading into Joan d'Aro's home, and passing up the gravel walk a moment later, entered the humble dwelling.

Jacques d'Aro and his wife Isabeau were sitting in the early moonlight near one of the open windows of their little living-room of their cottage.

Their sons had not returned from the day's festivities on the green, and the parents sat there waiting for their coming with their niece Marie ere they sought rest for the night. Above, in her neat little chamber, with her head bowed on her hand and that resting upon the window-sill, sat their daughter Joan.

Around her the white moonlight played a soft halo of glory over her streaming hair, her pure waxen brow, and her slight, silent figure. Her dark eyes were uplifted to the vault of heaven, and as the moonlight streamed over her she looked a rapt saint upon earth.

As she sat there, low, murmured words came from her lips, and fell upon the soft evening air.

"Yes, yes, it is true. Dame Dourell said true upon the village green to-day. It is I—Joan d'Aro—a simple peasant girl—who is to be the instrument in saving France! The voices from heaven tell me this; my own heart bids me go forward! I have long felt this strange unrest. It seems now clear to me that I must do something for my king. But yet how, and what can I avail?" Then for a brief space the fair brow clouded, and she put her hand to her head in a wondering maze of thought; then continued again: "The time is not yet. I see that plainly! When it comes, le bon Dieu will make known the path in which my feet must tread. Till then I must wait."

So absorbed was Joan in her thoughts that she had not noticed the opening gate as it gave entrance to Marie and Paul Alluf; and so she sat there, dreaming dreams and listening to the voices of the sweet spirits which she fancied she so often heard when alone by herself. And down below in the living-room they were conversing about her; for Marie asked as soon as she entered and did not see Joan with her parents:

"Where is Joan, Aunt Isabeau? Is she safe at home with you? for she disappeared so quickly from us to-day that I have seriously thought two or three times that the old witch whom you call Dame Dourell has spirited her away to make us believe in her horrible prophecies!" And the giddy girl went on to tell of the incident of the morning, and of Dame Dourell's strange prediction concerning her cousin Joan. Then as she concluded, she asked again:

"Joan is at home, is she not, Aunt Isabeau, for I am getting to be sadly nervous when I think of the old witch's words and manner toward ma chère cousine; and, besides, I have a lecture to read her on the impropriety of leaving her fascinating cousin alone amid so many dangerous swains!" she added, laughingly, glancing archly at her gallant with her smiling blue eyes.

"Yes, Joan is safe in her chamber. She came home in the early part of the morning," replied mother Isabeau. "I noted that the child looked pale. She must have been frightened at old Dame Dourell's words; and I am not sorry she sped homeward, if it was the case, for Joan is delicate and timid, and cannot bear a fright or strain of the nerves like most other girls." But, Marie, I think you are only trifling when you tell of danger to yourself from the young men's attentions to-day!" she added, smiling, as she

glanced at the merry countenance of her handsome niece, and then turned toward Paul Alluf.

"There was danger to the cavaliers, surely, fair lady!" said Paul Alluf, in reply to Isabeau d'Aro's words, yet addressing his words to Marie, and returning her implied compliment back upon herself.

"Well, well, there's always danger to young people's hearts when beauty and youth are about!" said Jacques d'Aro, with a merry twinkle of his honest eye. "Twere better did our Joan have more heart for the games of the young folks. She'd better suit her parents did she mix more with the mates of her age than to go about so much alone, and have such a strange look upon her face sometimes, as if she had been talking with spirits and their kin. I like to see real, live bodies, such as our pretty niece, Marie, and hear them chatter and laugh, as if they enjoyed being upon earth. I wish Joan was more like her cousin here."

"Say naught against our Joan, Jacques d'Aro," said his wife. "The child is prompt and obedient. She is only an infant yet in the ways of the world in comparison with her cousin Marie, who has been about much more, and being of a more lively nature takes to games and pleasures which our Joan as yet shuns from. 'Tis enough for Joan to make up and become a woman, and vex herself about the love matters that so trouble her young mates."

And the mother uttered these last words with a look at Paul Alluf which he understood and acknowledged, as he said:

"I am content to wait till Joan shall waken and return my love. My heart is on her as she is, and I must try and find some way to her heart in return."

"Yes, yes; she will give it to you. Only wait!—have patience, and our sweet Joan shall become your wife!" said Isabeau d'Aro. "I'll call her now to come down; and stay you, and spend the evening with us, Paul!" and as she spoke the women went to the staircase leading to her daughter's chamber, and called for Joan to come below to help entertain their visitor.

A few moments later, Joan sat beside her cousin Marie and Paul Alluf in the little room below; and after a while, Jacques and Isabeau d'Aro, seeing the young people pleasantly engaged in conversation, softly left the room and retired to their night's rest.

By-and-bye Pierre d'Aro came in; and then Marie adroitly managed to engage him in conversation, and to leave Paul and Joan together.

As the two sat apart by one of the open windows, beneath the shadow of the ravine, Paul sought to make known his feelings to Joan.

"I have been talking with your mother, Joan, concerning you," he said, "and she bids me wait, and hope for the love which I have never yet seen in your eyes toward me. Do you think it will come in time, Joan? for my heart is growing very tired with waiting," he added, earnestly.

"Oh, I don't know what you say! I don't know what your words mean!" Joan answered, a little agitated. "If you mean that I must think of you as of brother Pierre, then I can easily learn to do so. Is that what you would have me say, my good friend Paul?" she asked, nervously.

"No, no, sweet Joan; I could not rest satisfied with such affection. If you could give me a feeling like that your mother bears your father then I should be happy," he replied.

"That I cannot do, Paul Alluf. I do not think I can ever partake of such a gladness. Did you not hear the words of Dame Dourell to-day?—It is written plainly that I have another mission to fulfil. I have long felt it thus; and now, Paul, I see it more than ever. France must be saved; and there is none other than Joan d'Aro to turn the fortunes of the king!" and the girl uttered these words with a clear voice and impressive manner which went to the heart of every listener.

Paul replied: "You are too easily impressed, Joan. The words that old Dame Dourell spoke this morning have made too deep a mark upon your mind. You must banish all such wild thoughts, for what have you—a cottage girl—to do with saving France, whom its king and nobility and armies can do nothing? Think no more of the old grandame's ravings, and listen only to pleasant words, such as I can speak to you, if you will but bear their meaning."

But, even as he spoke, Paul Alluf saw that the maiden's mind was far away from him, and so he prudently and wisely resolved to drop the subject, and try and become interested in other matters, and Pierre and Marie, coming opportunely to his aid, the conversation now became more general—the latter chattering away volubly about the events of the day, her pleasure and the charming times she anticipated during the remainder of her visit in Domremy.

"And if Joan doesn't look out and brighten up I shall rob her of all her gallants!" she added, laugh-

ingly, in conclusion, after telling the wonderful exploits she hoped to achieve ere returning home.

"Oh, I have no fear, *ma chère cousine*," merrily spoke up Joan in reply. "I shall not enter the lists against you, and I give you my permission to win all whom you would wish."

"All Joan? say you all?" questioned Marie, with perchance more meaning than she would cared to have known in her query.

"Yes, all; why not?" said Joan, in reply. Then, looking up and seeing that Paul's eyes were resting on her face in a pained gaze, she shuddered a little and became embarrassed.

"Do you know, cousin Pierre, that I took a great fancy to that dark-eyed *Eloise* with whom you danced so much to-day? She is a *petite fleur* and was the prettiest of all the village at the green to-day, unless I except Joan here, who, I think, was so fully unaware of the effect her beauty produced in the short space of time she was with us," said Marie, as she turned towards her cousin and gave the conversation a new turn.

"You think *Eloise* lovely then, Marie. I was afraid you would not think her worth your attention. But to me she is the fairest girl in all *Domremy*, and I am happier now that I have your judgment upon it, for you have been and are still a most competent as well as charming judge."

"Yes, doubtless; for Marie Laxart is very beautiful and charming," replied the young man, with a gallant bow. Then he added, rising, "but I must be hastening home. The evening has sped away, and I did not know it."

And as the others rose he bade them a bon nuit and departed, murmuring as he went out, and on his homeward path:

"Yes, *Mary Laxart* is very charming; but my heart is given to her pure cousin Joan."

CHAPTER III.

SOME four weeks elapsed since the peasant youths met upon the village green of *Domremy*; and during that period Marie Laxart had completed her visit to her cousin's—and after captivating the hearts of nearly all the rustic beaux with her sparkling glances, charming ways, and jaunty, becoming costumes, had taken her departure again to her home in *Petit Burey*, carrying with her pleasant memories of her brief sojourn, and experiencing too a deep regret that her visit had come to an end. Somehow, after Marie returned home, there seemed to be a shade of melancholy oftentimes upon her fair countenance. Often she would sigh and look away, and then suddenly become nervous and restless with no seeming apparent cause; and her parents, noticing this strange mood of their usually sunny-faced Marie, at first wondered, and then grew to becoming anxious concerning her. But Marie would not acknowledge, and even did not realize that there was any change in herself. Only she did not feel the same interest as formerly in her home and the amusements of her young friends about her.

"I have grown more like my cousin Joan," she would say when her mother or father chided her on account of her sober moods. "It is not well always to be smiling or jesting. There should be deeper and soberer moods. Even as the clouds shut out the light of the sun, that when it shines it may seem more brilliant, so it usually is with some days of our lives; some must be dark and cloudy; and yet, my dear père and mère, I am not unhappy, only soberer, and sometimes a little restless. You must not vex yourselves about it. Your Marie is your sunny-faced, light-hearted, *petite Marie* still."

And they were content to believe it so, and went on thinking that the more sober-minded Joan d'Aro had imparted a vein of her moods to their hitherto gay daughter.

Durand Laxart, father of Marie, was a man of consequence in his native town of *Petit Burey*. Besides having the prettiest daughter, he possessed a flourishing business—that of a jeweller—which brought him in a good amount of interest every year; and, to this fact, could be attributed the richer robes and more brilliant jewels that Marie Laxart wore, for Durand Laxart liked to see his pretty daughter decked out in costly attire.

Amid the young men of her own town Marie had many admirers; but her heart had never yet given serious thought to any of these who hovered about her footsteps, ready to offer their allegiance at her slightest favour; and not until she visited her cousin Joan, at *Domremy*, did the maid find that she possessed a heart in common with the rest of her own and the opposite sex; and then the knowledge dawned upon her, only to call into existence those sober, abstracted moods which we have referred to.

One day six months later, Durand Laxart came into the little parlour where his wife and daughter were sitting. It was a chill, dreary day, and the wintry air and heavy rain out of doors seemed to

find entrance with the usually smiling-faced, cheerful husband and father, and the two, looking into Durand Laxart's face, noted that some ill had befitted him.

"Mon cœur! what has happened, Durand?" exclaimed his wife, as she let her work fall from her hands, and hastened towards him.

"Hélas, hélas! mon compagne, mon enfant! we are ruined! The safe, in which I kept our all has been robbed, and we are penniless; and not that alone, but the rich jewels left with me by le *Marchant Laval* are missing, and I am afraid he will hold me liable for their full amount—and, if so, there is, indeed, no help for us! Our home, and all we possess, would hardly realize their value, and we should be turned out upon the wide world with no place wherein to rest our weary heads. Hélas! my loved ones, what shall be done?" and Durand Laxart gazed mournfully upon his wife and daughter, as he uttered his sad lamentations in a mournful, dreary tone.

Marie had flung down her work, and now stood beside her father, and, while her mother seemed unable to speak from the suddenness of the terrible revelation, her sweet voice broke the stillness, and fell like music upon her fond parents' ears.

"Do not grieve if this is true, mon père! You have *ma chère mère* and your Marie left to you yet. I am young and strong; and can help you now to make more money in the future. You have often chided and smiled at me because I took a fancy to learn your fine art; and now you can see why it was that I took such a penchant for it, ever since I was a child. It was for this very time—to help you when you should need my younger eyes and still more delicate fingers in refining the gold, or placing the setting in some difficult case of jewels. See you not that it is so, mon chère père?" she asked, cheerfully, with almost a smile upon her pretty lips.

"Hélas, Marie! that it should be so! Mon Dieu! How can I bear it, to see *ma chère enfant*, whom I have nursed so carefully, forced to give up her pretty robes, her dainty jewels, and charming little trifles? and work like any common peasant maid till she shall become roughened and hardened with the labour? Dieu prevent it, for it will break my heart!"

And the man sank down into a chair as he thought of the vivid picture his mind had conjured up.

"You are more timid than Marie and I, Durand Laxart, if you grow weak so readily," said his wife. "If our home and all we have should be taken away, we have health and our wills left to make another. So be of good courage and le bon Dieu will give us help when we need aid. But how did this come about, Durand? When did you find all gone? and what have you done since then to search out the rogues and have them made to bear the punishment their crime deserves?" she asked.

"It was but just now that I have found it out. The safe had been robbed, broken into, and every paper and all the stored jewels and the money I had put there but last week for the purpose of buying that large shop in the upper street, all were gone. Ah, my beloved ones, it breaks my heart to think of it, and I can tell of nothing to be done!"

"Where is Pauline, mon père? Was he not in the office last night, and would he not be certain to have heard if any attempt had been made to enter it? I should not think that any robber would be so bold as to pilfer while Pauline was in the room, even if he slept, for his black eyes are so sharp and piercing that they seem to be looking everywhere, and a thief must be very courageous who, after once looking into them, could enter a room where he rested and hope to escape unnoticed," said Marie.

"Pauline was there all night, so he says," replied Durand Laxart. "He says that he slept unusually sound last night, because he had taken a potion of drugs to ease the pain of a tooth which troubled him the night before, and so he was determined to get rest and took a heavy dose and overslept, for I found him but just rubbing his eyes open when I went to the office this morning."

"And the robber must have come in and helped himself while Henri Pauline was asleep?" said Marie, in doubting, incredulous tones. "Do not believe it! That young man's eyes were wide apart at the time; and if my heart is not very far from the truth, it will be found that Henri Pauline could tell more concerning our lost treasures than he would care to do."

"Child, Marie, you are against Pauline because he has looked upon your pretty face only with a wish to make you his bride, and you think ill of him, therefore, because you do not return his passion. You should not let your feelings run away with your wisdom. The young man has always taken the best care of my interest, and I have thought that I could trust him with all I possessed and find that he was true to us."

"But I don't like him; and every time I look into his sharp, black eyes I feel like a bird that he is trying to get at with his beak, and devour at one supper. And I think, too, that this great hawk has a greedy look after your money by the way I have seen him count out the francs to them who came to buy of him."

"Certain it is that this ugly bird shall not peck at or catch our enfant, if he flies about her ever so much," said Durand Laxart in reply to Marie's words. "But we must not think evil of him in this matter, for he seems as anxious as I, and even more so, to find the bold burglars who have robbed us so wretchedly. He besought me to go to the chief magistrate, and tell the matter immediately; and offered to go himself to the merchant Laval, at *Vauquelles*, and ask his assistance in the matter of the missing jewels. So you see he is our true friend, and works for your father's interest, *ma chère Marie*!"

(To be continued.)

HUNTED FOR HER MONEY

CHAPTER XIII.

FOLLIOTT COURT is one of the finest seats in Lincolnshire, comprising a large and productive estate, which, although situated within the marshy region known as the Fens, is well protected by dykes, thoroughly well drained, and very healthful.

Its half-dozen farms are noted for the native sheep of extraordinary size, the great shorthorned cattle, and the London dray-horses of remarkable endurance which throng their pastures.

The mansion of Folliott Court crowns a slight eminence, and possesses ample home grounds, which are to this day surrounded by a well-kept moat some twelve feet in width.

The grounds enclosed by this circular moat comprise thirty acres of gardens, shrubberies, grove, and terrace, in the centre of which, like a jewel in elaborate casket, stands the house.

In the rear of the mansion, at considerable distance from it, the great clock-tower of the extensive stables rises from the midst of encircling trees and forms a prominent feature of the place.

The dwelling is ancient—a vast pile of brick buildings with stone copings, with tall end towers, and a massive stone porch, which might fitly form the entrance way to a palace.

Folliott Court is renowned for its green-houses, conservatories, its magnificent orangery and forcing-houses, its pinery and graperies. All that wealth can buy or luxury desire seems to have been gathered within the circle formed by the old moat.

Outside the moat stretches the park, which is of large extent, and the pastures and fields belonging to the manor.

The estate of Folliott Court is freehold. The late Lord Folliott had inherited property in the north of England which had been strictly entailed, but this had come to him by will from his grandfather, and it had descended in the same manner in the family since its foundation, sometimes going to an older and sometimes to a favourite younger son. The late Lord Folliott, being childless, had bequeathed this estate to his beloved wife, aunt of the real Miss Bermyngham, absolutely and unfettered by conditions, much of her own property having been employed to beautify and develop it.

Folliott Court then was a magnificent prize, which its present owner, Lady Horatia Folliott, had determined to bequeath to her husband's nephew and her own niece, should they marry with each other. In case they should not so marry, she was resolved to bestow it at her death upon that one of the young pair who should not decline the alliance.

As may be supposed, this glorious prize aroused all the cupidity and greed in the nature of the false Miss Bermyngham. The wealth that she had usurped, great as it was, could not satisfy her now that she could see a possibility of adding another and larger fortune to it. As passions grow by what they feed on, so greed had now become the ruling passion of the impostor's being. She was determined to make the most of the opportunities that had fallen in her way; to marry Sir Lionel Charlton, if he were willing; to inherit Folliott Court in any event.

As the estate was freehold, and as Lady Folliott consequently could give it to whom she might desire, the usurper began to pay court to the baroness after the most assiduous fashion, to fawn upon and flatter her, but in that pretty, purring, kitten-like way that seemed childlike, innocent, and the very perfection of artlessness.

It was the middle of the afternoon, or a little later, when Lady Folliott and the false Miss Bermyngham arrived at Spalding, and transferred

themselves from the railway train to the luxurious Folliot carriage, which with liveried attendants was waiting.

The drive to Folliot Court, in the mild April afternoon, across the Lincolnshire fens, was very pleasant.

An hour's brisk drive brought the travellers to the hamlet of Folliot Fens, which consisted of a single street known as King Street, upon which were situated the village church, the inn known as the "Folliot Arms," the smithy, two or three shops, in one of which was the post-office, and a dozen houses, one of which was occupied by the rector and another by a very excellent physician and surgeon.

The carriage passed swiftly through King Street, the shopkeepers rushing to their doors to witness the return of "my lady," and then were seen the houses set in the midst of large gardens. Beyond the village the road was bordered on one side by the trees of Folliot Park, and upon the other by pastures and fields.

"The village of Folliot Fens, for the most part, belongs to my estate," said Lady Folliot, quietly. "This is my park, Nereia. It will be yours and Lionel's some day, I hope. We shall turn in here and finish our drive through our own grounds."

The carriage drew up before a tall bronze gate, formed of spears, the heads of which were tipped with shining brass, which opened directly into the park. One of the footmen alighted and opened this gate, and they entered the wide avenue, shaded by grand old oaks. Presently they turned into another avenue, and the usurper, who was staring about her with eager eyes, beheld, in one bosky nook, a little marble temple of the Grecian order of architecture, in another a marble statue of a dryad or wood-nymph, in others rustic seats, airy pavilions, a charming little chalet, and several fountains, one of which, like that at Chatsworth, was in the form of a willow tree, from every twig and branch of which the water sprang out in jets and spray.

The false Miss Bermyngham was in raptures over all this display of luxury and taste. As Lady Folliot had appointed the time of her return, the fountains were playing. There were shy-eyed deer in large numbers. Upon the pretty lake swans were sailing.

"It is like fairy-land!" said the girl, drawing a long breath. "I never, never, saw any place half so charming! Aunt Folliot, it is Paradise! It must have cost—oh, mints and mints of money!"

"Certainly more than one fortune has been expended upon it," said the baroness. "My own dowry was absorbed in beautifying and improving the estate, and it was for that reason that Lord Folliot bequeathed Folliot Court to me absolutely. I conceive that my niece and his nephew have equal claims upon me, as I told you, my dear. I am glad, therefore, that you like the place. I hope that you will be mistress after I am gone," and she looked fondly upon the blonde and pretty face of the usurper.

"Is Sir Lionel Charlton at Folliot Court now?" inquired the false Miss Bermyngham.

"No, my dear. Folliot Court has always been his home more or less, but he has not been here for a month. His own place is in Herefordshire. He may be there at this time, or in town, or visiting some friend. He has promised to arrive here next week. I expected you to arrive at that time, my dear, and was anxious that he should be here to meet you. Now you see the towers of the Court, my dear. We are almost home now."

They crossed the handsome marble arch that spanned the moat, and passed along the winding drive, through shrubbery and gardens and lawns, coming to an abrupt halt in the carriage porch.

Lady Folliot alighted and gave her hand to the false Miss Bermyngham, who sprang out with a little childlike laugh.

"Home at last!" cried the usurper. "After these weeks of travel by sea and land, I have reached home at last!"

The house door stood open wide, and Lady Folliot, with words of affection, led the girl within the mansion.

The usurper's usually downcast eyes shot forth a long, sweeping, sidelong glance, after their usual fashion.

She beheld a stately old baronial hall, hung with armour, deers' antlers, and trophies of the chase, the walls and floors of marble, the furniture of ancient manufacture and exquisitely carved. The grand marble staircase opened from its especial hall, and a glimpse of it could be seen through the carved marble arches that partially screened it from view.

"We will go upstairs at once, my dear," said Lady Folliot. "Your room is ready, and my maid will be here directly. The servants followed us in a spring cart with the luggage, you know. I

will show you to your rooms, which are near my own."

The housekeeper was in waiting to receive her mistress, and Lady Folliot greeted her with kind courtesy, presented her to her guest, and then conducted the girl down the length of the stately hall beyond the arches, and up the great staircase.

This stair was broad enough for six persons to march abreast upon it. There were very frequent wide landings, and these spaces were ornamented with living dwarf palms in great majolica vases. There were frequent niches also filled with gleaming statuary.

Clinging to Lady Folliot's arm, the false Miss Bermyngham ascended the stair to the upper hall, which was of similar size to that below. Magnificent Gothic windows twelve feet wide lighted this hall, one window being at each end, and each window being provided with a very extensive balcony outside.

Doors opened from either side of this vast hall, which was hung with pictures and suitably furnished.

"My rooms are upon the right, Nereia," said Lady Folliot, and "look out upon the gardens and the park. Your rooms are exactly opposite mine, and afford views of the lawn and shrubberies and the rose garden."

She opened a door at her left and ushered the girl into a beautiful parlour, daintily furnished, the prevailing colour being pale blue. The walls were hung with fluted silk. The carpet was of blue and silver-gray. The couches, the roomy easy-chairs, the hassocks, were all of blue silk, embroidered with silver. The doors were of palest blue also, and the panels were of porcelain, ornamented with painted clusters of exquisite pink roses.

"It is a perfect bower!" cried the usurper, taking in all these details with a glance, and noticing also the frescoed ceiling, the chandelier with its forest of wax-lights, and the silvered grate, in which a fire was burning. "And you have remembered that I come from India and love warmth as a cat does!" she continued. "I am a true fire-worshipper, dear Aunt Folliot."

"Rooms that have been long unused require thorough warmth and ventilation before being occupied," said the baroness. "These rooms have been warmed every day for a week, Nereia. Not a suspicion of chill remains in the walls. Let me show you your dressing-room and bed-chamber."

The dressing-room immediately adjoined the parlour, and was in keeping with it. The bedroom was perfect in its way, having a dark polished floor dotted about with white rugs; a low, wide bed, with a canopy, from which fell a cloud of misty white drapery; and a couple of white easy-chairs.

The bath-room was large, and had a high raised platform, in which was a sunken marble bath. No luxury that art could devise was wanting here.

"And here is a closet for your maid, should you desire her to sleep near you," said Lady Folliot, opening the door of a small bedroom which was lighted by two windows. "And now, my dear, I will leave you to rest and make your toilette. We dine at seven o'clock. I will come for you myself!"

She led the way back to the blue parlour, and kissing the fair, false face of the deceiver, withdrew to her own apartments.

The girl threw off her hat, gloves and shawl upon a sofa, and looked around her with exulting eyes.

"Ah! that was a happy inspiration of mine," she said to herself, "to exchange places with that dead girl. She has lost nothing by the exchange but a splendid funeral, but I have gained great wealth, powerful friends, a luxurious home, absolute safety, the prospect of marrying this Sir Lionel Charlton, and of inheriting this great estate! Was ever a lot more magnificent than this I have grasped? I have been bold; I must be cunning. I must play my new part well. I must never be off my guard. I wonder," and a sinister smile played around her red lips, "what my Lady Folliot would say if she knew that her niece is dead, and that I am a usurper with a terrible past, that I am a fugitive from justice, that this little hand"—and she held up one white and jewelled member against the red glow of the fire, and surveyed it critically—"has done deeds of crime! Ah! if she knew who and what is the dainty creature she has taken to her heart and home as her beloved niece, I verily believe she would die of sheer horror! I know that she would not sleep a wink with me under her roof!"

The pretty blonde face, with that slow, sinister smile upon it, was thoroughly evil now in its expression. It was as if the girl had put off her mask of innocent seeming, and stood revealed in her real character, wicked, base, and unscrupulous.

Her eyes, over which the heavy lids were usually drooped, were open now. No wonder the girl was wont to keep those strange eyes hidden through pretended modesty and shyness. No more absolute contrast to her childish face could be imagined. They were bold and black, hard, keen, and malicious. A daring and malignant yet cowardly soul lurked within that slender girl's figure and showed itself in her open glances.

She flung herself upon a sofa near the fire, and continued to gaze about her lazily, with appreciative glances.

"I never imagined luxury like this," she mused. "I shall live like a princess here. I shall make my lady fairly dead upon me. I shall make Sir Lionel Charlton actually worship me. I have found my sphere at last. As to dangers, I think, if any arise, I shall be able to cope with them. The real Miss Bermyngham is dead. Fisherwick, her adviser and business agent, is dead also. Her money is invested in Consols, and I know how to draw the income at my pleasure. Miss Bermyngham lived quite secluded in Calcutta after her father's death, not bestowing or receiving visits. I have nothing to fear; no exposure of my imposture is possible. I have only to practise her handwriting assiduously, and all will be well. I have her diaries and letters. She was fond of talking, and told me all about herself and her friends. Yes, I can play my part thoroughly."

A servant appeared at this point of her reflections, bearing a salver, upon which was spread a light lunch, with a tiny silver pot of tea.

She partook of this refreshment leisurely, and had sent away the tray, when her maid entered her presence.

This attendant was a discreet-looking Frenchwoman of middle age, with a sallow skin, a very low forehead, and bushy black hair. She was almost noiseless in her movements, and was dressed in black, so that she moved about like a shadow. She was accomplished in all the arts of her trade, and was likely to prove invaluable to her new mistress. She had, however, a habit of starting at every unexpected sound that aroused the usurper's suspicion that her past also held its secrets. This point her mistress had decided to investigate at the earliest opportunity.

"Well, Finette," said the supposed Miss Bermyngham, lazily, "has my luggage arrived?"

"Yes, my lady," responded the maid, flattering her mistress with a title. "At least, two of the new boxes—the ones you directed—came in the spring-cart with us. The remaining trunks will arrive in another conveyance—a big waggon. The two that came with me were just taken into your dressing-room. I stopped below in the servants' hall a few minutes, ma'amaiselle, to make the acquaintance of the maids."

"You are to sleep near me, Finette," said her mistress. "You will find your bed-closet on investigation. The first thing to be done is to lay out my dinner-dress. I am just out of mourning for my dear papa, and I will wear a lavender-coloured silk with black trimmings—the Pingat, you know. And now leave me, and don't come near me till six o'clock. I want to sleep."

The maid retired. But the mistress did not sleep. She lay broad awake, staring into the fire, and exulting in her successes, and planning a future when, as Lady Charlton, she might possess all this grandeur for her own.

At six o'clock Finette returned, and her mistress arose, yawning, and entered her dressing-room.

"It is a grand place, this Folliot Court, my lady," said the Frenchwoman, admiringly. "I never saw such splendour before—never! There are thirty servants, ma'amaiselle. It is a palace!"

"It will be all mine some day!" said the girl, coolly. "I shall crowd the Court with gay company when I become mistress here; I shall give balls to the county gentry, and set the fashions for this part of Lincolnshire. I shall never be contented with a quiet country life, as a Lady Bountiful to the poor, and all that—never."

Finette dressed her with a Frenchwoman's taste, and long before the dinner-hour her mistress was attired in a trained lavender silk robe, trimmed with innumerable ruffles, puffs, and platings, with here and there a slender line of black which gave tone to it. The basque was heart-shaped at the neck, and a double Elizabethan frill of point lace rose high around the girl's white throat. Her red-gold hair was dressed high in braids and waves and curls, and in her ears swung great yellow topazes, which glowed like mimic suns.

She was waiting in her parlour when Lady Folliot, in her dinner dress of black velvet, came to her. The bell had rung, and the two ladies had descended together to the dining-hall, a spacious apartment, which was perfect in all its appointments.

They lingered an hour over their dinner, and Lady Folliot then conducted her guest toward the drawing-room.

"I find a letter in waiting for me from Sir Lionel

Charlton," said the baroness, as they passed along the hall. "He will be with us in a day or two. He is prepared to like you, Nera. It depends upon you to make him love you. But indeed I don't see how he can help falling in love with you at first sight," she added, affectionately. "You are one of those loving, clinging little creatures that men adore. Come this way, darling. You shall read his letter for yourself, and tell me if you think you can love him."

They passed into the drawing-room together, arm-in arm.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE bold defiance of Beatrix Rohan, as she stood at bay, utterly amazed and appalled both Mr. Hillsley and Colonel Brand.

The former was horrified and shocked. He believed the girl was mad. His sole anxiety now was to get her out of his house without arousing the neighbourhood.

Colonel Brand was infuriated. Had it not been for the presence of Mr. Hillsley he could have seized the spirited girl and throttled her. He felt for her in that moment a hatred that terrified him. He could not trust his voice to speak.

"Miss Rohan," said Mr. Hillsley, in a voice that actually trembled, but which was intended to be deprecating and soothing—a voice in which he would have addressed a mad woman—"for Heaven's sake, be calm, be reasonable! Don't excite yourself so terribly. No one will harm you. By Heaven, Colonel, what are we to do?"

He looked helplessly at Colonel Brand.

That gentleman looked equally perplexed.

It was plain that, if they ventured to approach Beatrix, she would execute her threat and shriek for help, crying out that appalling word—Murder. And Colonel Brand was equally with his friend adverse to attracting a crowd in the street or summoning a policeman. The Colonel wiped the cold perspiration from his narrow, retreating forehead, and arched his long, thin nose and chin convulsively like a nutcracker in active operation.

Beatrix looked from one to the other of the two men with great burning eyes. Her fair face was pale and anxious, but not despairing.

"Mr. Hillsley," she said, addressing the trustee in a voice which she endeavoured to render calm, "you were my father's honoured and trusted friend. As such, I again appeal to you. My personal guardians have proved themselves false to the trust reposed in them. They are cruel and treacherous and unscrupulous. They have starved and imprisoned me. They are determined to force me into a marriage with their son. Again I beseech you to befriend and protect me—to assist me in my application to the courts for a new guardian."

Again Mr. Hillsley fixed his gaze upon Colonel Brand.

That gentleman had gained sufficient self-possession to enable him to speak calmly, yet with a great affectation of grief and anxiety.

"My dear child," he said, "why will you cherish this singular hallucination? Why will you wrong us so cruelly? My poor wife was the beloved sister of your father. He knew her thoroughly, and he entrusted to her his most precious possession, his daughter, knowing that that daughter would receive from her a mother's care and tenderness. Mr. Hillsley knows us well, and is not to be imposed upon by your wild accusations. My dear child, you break my heart," and Colonel Brand put his handkerchief to his eyes. "You are as dear to me and Selina as is our own son. Conquer this singular mania of yours, my dear child, and let me take you back to my weeping Selina, your second mother, who will receive you with open arms!"

Beatrix replied to this by a look of scorn and contempt. Mr. Hillsley, intercepting that glance, could scarcely repress a groan. His rosy, Sybaritic face was pitiable in his expression of misery. Loving his ease as he did, hating all annoyance, trouble, and excitement, this scene was to him a martyrdom.

Pleased with the sound of his own words, and with the impression they had made upon the trustee, Colonel Brand warmed to his work and continued:

"Yes, Beatrix, all shall be forgiven and forgotten, you will go quietly with me to your poor, weeping Aunt Selina. We will cherish you most tenderly. If you have conceived an aversion to your cousin, he shall be sent away. Come, then, dearest child, come home with us."

He moved towards her with outstretched arms.

"Back!" cried Beatrix, sharply. "One step nearer, Colonel Brand, and I'll scream for help!"

Colonel Brand paused upon the instant.

"Mr. Hillsley," said Beatrix, "you have not yet answered my last appeal. Have you no pity for the daughter of your old friend? Do you refuse to aid me in my terrible extremity?"

The trustee looked his embarrassment.

"My dear Miss Rohan," he said, "you are the ward of your aunt and uncle. I have known them many years, and cannot believe this evil you allege against them. I cannot assist you to bring scandal upon their honourable name nor to make of yourself a spectacle for the gaping crowds that throng the courts. Colonel and Mrs. Brand stand to you in the place of your deceased parents. You belong to them until you attain your majority, and I cannot interfere between them and you any more than I could interfere between parents and child."

The girl's dark-gray eyes dilated and shone like stars.

"Then you refuse to help me?" she demanded.

"I do utterly refuse to interfere in this matter."

The girl's eyes wandered to the thin dark face of Colonel Brand. It was now aglow with wicked exultation. His little black ferret-eyes looked like burning coals. Beatrix shivered with terror.

"Knowing all that I have told you," she said, "you persist in sending me back to persecution—to a certain death? For, so sure as I go back to that Belgian chateau with Colonel Brand, I shall be allowed to emerge from it only as his son's wife or in my coffin. Do you understand, Mr. Hillsley? These people mean to seize upon my fortune before I attain my majority, even if they have to murder me to obtain it."

Mr. Hillsley gave a little gasp of horror.

"Miss Rohan," he said, "you terrify me. Such hallucinations are frightful. I decline again and finally to interfere between you and your guardians. I believe them to be good and just. Colonel"—and he turned abruptly to the hypocrite beside him—"I think for your own safety and that of your wife you should put this poor young lady under medical restraint."

"We could not do that," ejaculated the Colonel.

"We could not bear to give up the care of our poor girl to strangers."

"I must beg you to remove her from my house immediately, Colonel," said the trustee. "I cannot bear a prolongation of this scene. You should be off if you mean to catch the train," and he glanced at the clock. "You have barely time to do so."

"You hear, Beatrix?" said Colonel Brand. "Mr. Hillsley's trust in me is unimpaired. He declines to pay attention to your insane appeals. He sees that your mind is unbalanced. I will not reproach you, nor again endeavour to argue with you; but, scream as you will, I am going to take you back with me to the Chateau Valbeck, and we are going to start now!"

He moved toward her, his face terrible in its threatenings and the fixedness of his purpose.

Beatrix drew open the door, and darted out like a flash.

Colonel Brand flew after her.

The hall door was closed, but the key was in the lock. There was a moment's delay, but the door was pulled open at last, and Beatrix, in a panic, sped down the steps. Colonel Brand, who had caught up his hat in passing, was at her heels.

There was no time to spring into the waiting cab—there was no resource save to continue her mad flight—anywhere—anywhere—so that she might escape from her remorseless enemy.

The cabman who had brought her to Upper Berkeley Street, witnessing her flight, alighted and rang the bell of Mr. Hillsley's house, but the hall porter could not answer his excited questionings. Mr. Hillsley declined to see him, and he mounted his box and drove away with the intention of calling at No. 4, Wellesley Terrace, Bayswater, for the amount of his fare. It thus happened that no clue to the girl's refuge in London was placed in the hands of her enemies.

Beatrix sped on like a mad creature, turning corner after corner with a wild precipitancy. Desperation lent her strength. Capture was death or worse than death. Colonel Brand kept close to her, only a few feet of distance intervening between them. She was weak from a long course of starvation and great recent fatigues, and but for her terrors must have fallen after a flight of but a few rods. Colonel Brand was thin, sinewy, and strong. He gained upon her with his long strides; nevertheless the girl would not surrender.

The night was light, and the street lamps burned brightly. The fugitive passed several pedestrians, one or two of whom made an attempt to stop her, but she eluded them and hurried onward, wild-eyed and panting, with a gathering despair and frenzy.

"Stop!" cried Colonel Brand, in a hissing voice, close at her back. "I have you now! By Heaven, you shall pay for this! Once I get you back to the chateau—"

His claw-like hand grazed her shoulder.

With a shrill, wild scream, Beatrix sprang forward with renewed strength, and darted around a corner into Oxford Street.

Colonel Brand bounded after her with a fearful imprecation.

Beatrix saw only a glare of lights, with flitting shadows, in the great thoroughfare. She could distinguish neither sight nor sound. It seemed as if she were in a horrible nightmare.

And then again came that claw-like clutch upon her shoulder.

And again Colonel Brand's voice hissed in her ears:

"You shall pay for this! Now—now I have you!"

And the fierce talons grasped her in a vice-like clutch.

"Help! help!" shrieked the girl, in agony.

"For the love of Heaven, help!"

That wild appeal was not uttered in vain.

A young gentleman, who had witnessed the pursuit from the instant Beatrix had turned into Oxford Street, and who had halted when Colonel Brand had seized her, now sprang forward, crying out:

"Let go the lady, you scoundrel!"

Colonel Brand snarled like a tiger.

"Stand back!" he said. "She belongs to me!"

"Oh, help, help!" cried Beatrix, in a faint and dying voice. "In the name of Heaven, help!"

The young gentleman believed the girl to have been pursued by some villainous scoundrel who had encountered her in the street and had chosen to insult her. Acting upon this hasty supposition, with all the impetuosity of a fiery and chivalrous spirit, he doubled his fist and very promptly assaulted Colonel Brand and knocked him down.

Beatrix stood, deathly white, panting for breath, utterly strengthless.

Colonel Brand sprang to his feet and harled himself upon his assailant, at the same time calling for the police.

But the police did not respond to his outcry. His opponent received his attack very coolly, parried his blows, and planted his fist again in the Colonel's face, hitting him squarely upon the forehead.

Colonel Brand fell to the ground as if shot.

The young gentleman, having ascertained that his antagonist was stunned and senseless, turned his attention to Beatrix.

She was leaning against a door-frame in an almost fainting condition.

By this time a crowd had collected. The shops were for the most part closed, but the coloured lights of a chemist's shop flared from a window in the next street. The young gentleman, leaving Colonel Brand to the marries and ministrations of the crowd, drew the arm of Beatrix within his and hurried her down the street.

Before they had taken ten steps she had lost her consciousness, and would have fallen but for his prompt support.

He gathered up her slight and wasted figure in his arms and crossed the street, hurrying to the chemist's shop, into which he carried her.

He explained that he had rescued the young lady from one who had insulted her, and Beatrix was borne into a little parlour behind the shop, where, through the influence of restoratives, she presently regained her consciousness.

Her first utterance was a low cry of affright as she started up and stared around her.

But these were friendly faces that bent over her—the little chemist, who wore spectacles, and who possessed an honest, kindly face; the chemist's wife, a timid, frightened little woman; and the gentleman who had rescued her from her enemy.

The gaze of Beatrix lingered longest and most gratefully upon her preserver.

He was young, about twenty-three years of age, tall, active, and slenderly built, with a face of extraordinary beauty.

His complexion was olive-tinted; his eyes were black, and were at once frank, honest, deep, and kindly; his forehead was broad, high, and massive, and his head was covered with short, black, silky curls, that lay in close rings. His face was smooth-shaven save for his luxuriant black moustache. His mouth was firm and well-shaped, capable of expressing a womanly sweetness and gentleness or a man's sternest and haughtiest anger.

His face, whether studied as a whole, or feature by feature, was grand and noble and beautiful. It was a face indicative of a grand and chivalrous soul, of an ardent temperament, and of a well-principled mind.

Beatrix felt an instinctive trust in his goodness, but this trust did not prevent her from sending a quick glance of alarm and inquiry around her.

"Fear nothing," said the young gentleman, gravely and respectfully. "You are quite safe here, madam. That scoundrel will not dare to follow you here."

"That he will not," said the chemist. "It would not be safe for him."

But Beatrix would not be reassured. She knew

that Colonel Brand, being her guardian, had a legal right to take charge of her, and she struggled to her feet, wild and anxious.

"Oh, let me go! let me go!" she exclaimed. "He will come for me here; and I am so weak. Will you not call a cab for me? What is that noise?"

"I beg you to compose yourself, madam. You are quite safe here. I will defend you with my life, if necessary. I guarantee your safety upon the honour of a gentleman. Permit me to introduce myself to you. I am Sir Lionel Charlton."

(To be continued.)

A VALUABLE SECRET.

If the anecdote is old, the lesson of life it bears can never grow old, any more than can the divine lessons of the Sermon on the Mount.

It is related of Franklin that from the window of his office he noticed a mechanic, among a number of others, at work on a house which was being erected close by, who always appeared to be in a merry humour, and who had a kind and cheerful smile for every one he met. Let the day be ever so cold, gloomy, or sunless, the happy smile danced like a sunbeam on his cheerful countenance. Meeting him one day, Franklin requested to know the secret of his constant happy flow of spirits.

"It's no secret, doctor," the man replied, "I've got one of the best of wives, and when I go to work she always gives me a kind word of encouragement, and a blessing, with her parting kiss; and when I go home she is sure to meet me with a smile and a kiss of welcome; and then tea is sure to be ready; and as we chat in the evening I find she has been doing so many little things through the day to please me that I cannot find it in my heart to speak an unkind word or give an unkind look to anybody."

And Franklin adds:

"What an influence, then, hath woman over the heart of man, to soften it, and make it the fountain of cheerful and pure emotions. Speak gently, then; a happy smile and a kind word of greeting after the toils of the day are over cost nothing, and go far toward making a home happy and peaceful." B. O.

MARRIAGEABLE WOMEN.

ONE of the great social problems of the day is to explain why there are so many marriageable women who never get married. Some say that it is owing to an excess in numbers of women over men; in consequence of which there are not husbands enough to go round. This, however, is disproved by statistics. Take the world through, and the figures show that there are as many men in it as there are women. Others attribute it to the expensiveness of modern life. Men do not marry because, it is said, they cannot afford to. But the fact is no man who truly loved a woman ever hesitated to become engaged to her and eventually marry her because of poverty.

There are men with no idea of any feeling for a woman stronger than a languid admiration, who may be deterred from assuming what they regard as a burden in the shape of a wife unless assured of a liberal income; but most are not so calculating. Others, again, attribute the evil to women's fastidiousness. They expect too much in a husband, and, while waiting for an impossible shadow, let the possible substance slip through their fingers. This is a libel on the sex. As a rule, they are no more fastidious than men are, and are just as susceptible as men to that enchantment of love which invests its object with every perfection and covers up every fault. So far as men and women themselves are concerned, they are as prone to marriage now as in any period of the world's history.

Nevertheless, there the women are, waiting for husbands, and not getting them. They are pretty, they are accomplished, they are sensible, and under proper training they would make excellent wives and mothers; but they never get a chance. What seems to be needed is a more thorough method of bringing men and women into social contact with each other.

THE SHADOW OF THE STORM.

CHAPTER IX.

"WILL they discover us, Emile?" said Lady Felicie, as her preserver approached her.

"I think not, my child. We must manage without a fire till their watch is removed. But we can do that well enough; we are provisioned for six months at least. There are several casks of water upstairs, and the spring is not far distant; I can easily replenish them at night."

"How exhausted you must feel! Take some of the wine, I beg you."

"Perhaps I had better; I dare not go to sleep until after the visit to the woods, for I may hear important plans discussed. After that I must sleep, for

I believe it is a week since I have really taken a night's rest. It is nearly daybreak now; I brought a basket of provisions from the chateau, thinking they might please you best; pray take what refreshment you can, for we must not have another patient. Poor fellow! he is in a complete stupor. Keep his head wet all the time—it seems to be all we can do now; and be sure and care for yourself!"

"The poor chateau!" murmured Felicie, sinking wearily into a chair, and for the first time throwing off the heavy black cloak.

The bridal dress, rent and soiled, and in several places crimsoned with the blood of her father, came to view.

The thought of the tender maternal care which had arranged every fold with such proud and loving hands, of the woeful tragedy which had met her, instead of the bridal service, was too overpowering, as it rushed suddenly upon her.

She fell back fainting. Emile caught her in his arms, and while the tears poured over his cheeks he used every effort to revive her. For a long time it seemed to him he was to be left with two corpses on his hands, for the youth scarcely stirred, and Felicie lay cold and breathless in his arms.

But the latter at length gasped, and in a few moments opened her eyes. He laid her tenderly upon the pile of blankets brought from the chateau, and gave her spoonful after spoonful of wine.

"You deserve better behaviour," said she, feebly; "I did not mean to yield to my feelings, but the sudden remembrance of my desolation swept aside all my fortitude."

"You have been brave and courageous, my child; I can admire, but not blame your noble efforts. Ah, Felicie! if I allow myself to return to the thought that she is gone my strength gives way—but for the present we must not dwell upon it. Dearest one, your grief is mine; for her sake you will be the most precious thing left in the world, even if your own merits did not win my esteem. The chateau is gone, they are gone too for the brief day of life—thank Heaven, not for the eternal ages! Will you consent to put away your identity as the daughter of the Count Languedoc? Will you adopt me for a father, brother, uncle, whatever you like, and take a new name? I think the sooner you use yourself to it the safer it will be when it becomes necessary," said Emile, gently.

"Tell me what you wish, and that is enough for me."

"Your name shall be Chlotilde; I had a sister once whose name was Reinard—you shall be for the time Mademoiselle Reinard; and as my young friend yonder, if he recovers, will be likely to be awkward and embarrassed in your presence, knowing your rank, I particularly request that he shall believe you my sister's child. You will become somewhat used to the name, I hope, before you venture into the world. And now I must listen to the doings without; he still and rest—the patient will not stir for many hours, and doubtless it is the best thing—kindly nature will recuperate the palsied brain with the sweetest of balms, untroubled sleep."

He went back, this generous, self-sacrificing man, to watch and listen for the approach of the blood-thirsty, unscrupulous foe. For himself there was no real danger, he had but to go forth boldly and the Falcon of Paris received instant protection and confidence; but for these helpless ones he stood bravely in defence, never for a single moment harbouring the thought of deserting them to secure himself from peril.

Once intense weariness overpowered him, and, leaning against the natural wall of his secret apartment, he fell sound asleep.

Sharp voices without aroused him suddenly. He started up, alert and not in the least bewildered, and put his ear to the tiny aperture in the trunk of the huge tree.

"You are an idiot, Pepin!" said M. Pierre's voice, angrily. "Why didn't you shoot the fellow? Now he has got away—I know who it was well enough—it was the one I vowed should die first."

"I thought he was dead, Citizen Pierre."

A volley of oaths exploded a little of M. Pierre's rage, and after it he was able to answer coherently.

"So did I; but I have opened the grave, and I tell you two are missing. The girl has escaped beside. Ill luck attends me. They have found all the diamonds too, and are off; but I shall track them, I shall find them, though I hunt France over. They are hid somewhere, and they will try to reach some foreign country. It is the shore I must watch. Not a craft of any kind must leave night or day without a thorough search. I will triumph yet. Keep a band of men around this forest, and when day comes we will search it thoroughly. I suspect, though, some soft-hearted fool has given them a shelter; the possessor of the estate were always ready to kiss the ground Felicie and her mother stood on, much as they

hated the count. We must keep a sharp eye on all; there is old Jeannot, where is he in all this excitement? not a sign have I seen of him."

"Never you fear, comrade, if they are about we'll beat them up. But who could they have been, those black-masked villains who beat us off when we thought we held the chateau?"

"Perdition seize them! It must be looked to. There's not much fear of their appearing another time, things will be more orderly in future, and the whole country is up now. I half suspect they had our motives, Pepin, to get the diamonds and treasure for themselves, and they have got them, or else that miscreant revived and bolted with bride and money both; but I shall find them yet, let me alone for that."

"The man I saw certainly came as far as here, but where he went then no one knows. I lost him, like as if the earth had opened and swallowed him."

"Well hunt the whole place over thoroughly when daylight comes; this confounded dry ground won't give us a trace of steps. But, comrade, let us station a pack of our men around the whole place."

Talking eagerly they moved slowly off.

"We must lie close for our lives," muttered Emile, as he sat down again; "but I feel pretty secure, I left no trace of my work when I excavated. The door I would defy a police officer to find without acquaintance with the secret. Let the villain Pierre search, the Falcon is too keen-eyed to be caught! And yet it will change my plans—I must not attempt to leave by the Mediterranean, I see that. It is safest to go where the danger is most imminent, when you are followed, for there no one suspects you have the temerity to venture. Yes, we must all get away from here to some large city—I am not sure but it were better to go direct to Paris itself. For Felicie there would be little risk, but for the youth a great deal—yet it will mar my plans to separate them! Well, I am not obliged to decide to-night. Now is my opportunity for the much-needed rest—an hour or so will freshen me wonderfully."

He drew over him a blanket he had left there for the purpose, and curled himself up for sleep, and was evidently accustomed to obtain rest in this manner or he would not so soon have fallen into sound sleep in such an uncomfortable position.

Below, the injured youth was lying stirless as a log, only the heavy breathing showing signs of life, and Lady Felicie, wrapt in sweet slumber, was dreaming that her mother's arm encircled her and they were pacing softly on the chateau terrace.

The gay dawn broke slowly over the scene, the roseate flush crept up the sky, and touched pityingly the blackened heap of ruins where but yesterday had risen so proudly the grand old building. Softly the growing gold flooded the trampled ground, the desecrated graves, the melancholy, pitiable wreck of the home the Count Languedoc so fondly believed should stand in pride throughout the century. And he, its haughty master, was lying in an unhallowed grave.

Mellow and warm were those sunbeams ere they crept through the leafy canopy of the forest, and bathed gratefully the massive trunk of the great tree, whose hollow stairway gave safe shelter to the hapless orphan.

They all slept far into the day; but when Emile came down he found Felicie quietly giving the youth a glass of water and bathing his head.

His eyes looked rational and intelligent; as Emile came forward they brightened perceptibly.

"You are better," said the latter, joyfully.

"Thank you, I believe so; have I been ill? Shall we get along on the journey to-day? My friends will be so painfully anxious, I would risk a great deal. But you seem destined to be my preserver."

Emile looked a little embarrassed.

"Not so rational as I supposed," said he, in an undertone. "Mademoiselle Chlotilde, would you be so good as to get me a little of the bread for my breakfast and there is some cold meat, I think."

She obeyed at once, and this errand took her to the farther apartment.

Emile seized the moment to bend over the youth. "Have you forgotten the terrible night at the chateau, how you were knocked senseless, how I brought you to the forest, to my secret retreat? And do you remember that your name is Jules Hents, and that there is caution to be maintained before all, even my little niece here."

He spoke the words rapidly, but with emphasis; Jules stared at him a moment vacantly, then shuddered from head to foot.

"Yes, I remember. Heaven help me!" cried he, in a voice of anguish.

"You are safe, it shall be well with you, only promise to be calm. I shall care for you."

He caught the hand in his and the tears gushed over it.

"Noble benefactor, nobler than the royalist of an imperial line, what can I ever do to express my gratitude?"

"Be calm and learn to recover happiness."

Jules smiled feebly, closed his eyes, and sank off into slumber.

Emile hastened to the side of Felicie, who was setting forth the little table with every delicacy she could find.

"You are taking too much trouble, dear Chlotilde (you see I must accustom you to the name); only some bread and meat, and a little wine. You will find a spirit lamp for your coffee, somewhere. I am sorry that you must do without a servant, but it is imperatively necessary that you learn to understand a little of the work usual to the class you are to represent; I will try to make it as easy as possible for you."

Her eyes filled with tears.

"Pray don't think of trying, dear, generous friend; I am so thankful for work, anything that keeps my hands busy and my mind from dwelling upon past horrors. And for you! oh, how gladly would I go upon my knees, wear the flesh from my fingers, to feel I was really repaying a little of what I owe to you."

"My child," began Emile, and broke down with the sob that caught his voice; "Heaven above knows how fully I am rewarded for all I can do for you without any return of yours. Yet give me a little affection, such as I might claim if I were really your uncle, and I shall be blessed indeed."

Lady Felicie took his hand and raised it to her lips.

Emile turned away, too much affected by the simple act to be able to reply.

CHAPTER X.

M. PIERRE and his band of ruffians scoured the little forest over and over the next day, nor desisted until the shadows of night prevented farther search. More than once did the baffled leader pause and lean against the trunk of the very tree whose reticent trunk might have given lucid answers to all his fierce questioning had it chosen, or had he possessed the secret spell to unlock its mysteries.

Emile from within heard his bitter denunciation of the fate that thwarted him, and his fierce vows to persist in the search until success rewarded him, and smiled in calm defiance.

But M. Pierre was not so insignificant a foe as Emile believed. As the days wore on, and the same vigilant watch was kept over the forest, the village, and the coast, the latter found that it would need his utmost shrewdness and adroitness to effect an escape from the tree.

One night he ventured out, and took a circuitous route to the town. He managed to slip between the sentinels stationed in a ring around the little forest and reached one of his allies at Frejus.

From him he learned of the thorough precautions taken to intercept them, and of the dogged persistence of M. Pierre's belief in their vicinity.

This man was outwardly amongst the most eager of M. Pierre's supporters and was much in his confidence, and he assured Emile that it would be extremely hazardous to attempt escape for a month at least, although he was willing to do the best he could for them.

Emile heard his unfavourable account thoughtfully, and said:

"I see plainly that I must mix among you here. I will remain secreted with you through the day and make my way back to my hiding-place at midnight. The next night I will manage to get out on the highway, and do you give out publicly that you have received word that the Falcon is coming down from Paris to stir up the populace of Frejus. Come and meet me and if you can introduce me to this Pierre. Let me gain the confidence of the majority and I think I can manage the matter."

Getting back into the forest was not so easy a matter, the change of guards had given control to a more faithful and vigilant set of men.

Emile was challenged twice, and giving some hasty excuse, saying he was a trusty citizen of Frejus out to look at the chateau ruins, was gruffly ordered back to the town.

He turned back a little way and laid himself down among the bushes, just in sight of the pacing figure.

What must he do? Daylight was at hand, and it was absolutely necessary he should prepare his young charges for his absence and acquaint them with his future plans.

Lying prone on his face he crawled along, the reconnaissance showing him there was one spot at a projecting knoll where but one sentinel was stationed, and he hardly in sight of the others, when he turned the rather sharp corner.

Emile's mind was made up at once. He found a heavy stick, and in the same serpent fashion crept cautiously along on the ground towards the spot.

Having obtained the desired position he remained perfectly quiet, allowing the unconscious guard to pass three times over his head ere he made any demonstration. On the fourth, as the man slowly moved around the point, he leaped to his feet, and in the twinkling of an eye tripped him up, and sent him sprawling two or three yards away.

In the brief time required for the astonished man to gather himself up Emile had darted into the wood. Away he sped, the swifter for the loud halloo of the sentinel.

He was familiar with every spot in the forest, and gained his object long before the aroused sentinels could follow him. He found his faithful friends anxiously awaiting his return.

Jules had recovered entirely, and he listened anxiously to the plans of Emile.

"It will do very well for me who shall have my old strength in a few days longer, but for your niece, for Mademoiselle Chlotilde, it would be more trying. But why indeed should they bear any ill will to her?"

"Because she has lived in a noble family and was extremely attached to its members; because this abominable Pierre means to make her his wife, and she abhors the idea."

"Abhors indeed!" ejaculated Jules, gazing after the slender figure which had passed into the farther room, which she had taken for her own private retreat. "So singularly gifted and refined a creature to marry that odious overcast! The very idea is distressing even to me. Ah, Monsieur Emile, if you and your niece are impartial types of your class I cannot help feeling humiliated that we have ever presumed to call others noble in comparison."

"Chlotilde has had superior advantages," observed Emile, quietly; "I doubt if the hapless Lady Felicie Languedoc herself was more accomplished or graceful."

"I am sure I have not a moment's question about it," replied Jules, hastily; "none of the noble ladies I have ever seen could equal Chlotilde for loveliness or grace."

"The care of this retreat will devolve upon you in my absence. It will be safe to go a few yards from the tree at night, but no farther than that. I would not even have you venture to the spring. I will fill up the water casks before I leave. I am thankful for the few books I brought from the chateau; with them and each other's society I trust you will not find your imprisonment under ground irksome."

"Oh, no; that is, I must speak for myself. It is a peaceful refuge from carnage and violence. But for past horrors and anxious fears of the future I could not ask a happier life. Chlotilde too seems weighed down by some grievous recollections. I do not like to question her."

"Do not, I beseech you. Allow them to die away if possible. Nor would I refer before her to your own. It is worse than idle to dwell upon the past, since nothing can remedy it; and it weakens your vigour and energy for coping with future perils."

"I have endeavoured to follow your directions. What more did you hear from Paris?"

"Additional horrors—the people have gone mad. They must become gorged with blood ere the reaction comes. I foresee that. Nevertheless, I can see no other way than for us to get to Paris. It is the only place where this M. Pierre will not search for you and the girl he has declared shall marry him."

"But I shall be recognized by scores there," exclaimed Jules, with a shudder.

"I hope not. I shall find means to colour that fair hair jetty black; you must wear it in another fashion. Garments, too, make a wonderful change; and of course you will keep as retired as possible."

Jules drew a long breath.

"It seems to me I would rather remain here for ever, but I trust implicitly in your sagacity. I yield unquestioning obedience."

"Your health would suffer by long residence in this sunless cave. I am already anxious about Chlotilde. The two weeks have paled her cheek sadly. With extreme caution you might both go up to the surface every day. There are apertures in the trunk of the tree to take reconnaissance in every direction. Seeing the ground clear you could venture out, though I warn you to be wary. If he crafty this Pierre will soon remove his watch from sight and set a secret trap. But I mean to get you both away speedily."

Felice came from her room and looked up affectionately in his face.

"You have talked with Jules long enough, my uncle, say something to Chlotilde now."

He drew his hand caressingly over the glossy hair

"I have been telling him what good care he must take of my child when I am gone."

"Gone? oh, Emile!" exclaimed she, in consternation.

"For a little time, dear one, only to prepare for your escape."

The tears were slowly trickling down her cheeks, she could not speak a word of answer.

"Why, my little one, are you so stricken? Jules is left to take care of you."

"Jules is a very poor substitute for you, monsieur; no one is better aware of it than he himself, but he will do his best," observed the youth, gravely.

"Nay, nay," interposed the girl, eagerly. "I did not mean to wound your feelings, dear Jules; you are everything kind and good, as agreeable and pleasing a companion as I could ask, but then we have relied so thoroughly upon my uncle it struck me with sudden dismay to think of losing him."

"For a little time, my child. It is because I fear for your health and am anxious to get you away that I leave at all. You will not be weak and childish, I know, but will be calm and heroic, to help me all you can."

"I will try," replied she, firmly, but the sweet lips quivered sadly.

"And you will succeed. Jules must exert all his powers to divert your thoughts. You must read together, and tell fairy stories, and be good children till I return, like a good girl, to release you from your dungeon."

He smiled playfully, but there was a moisture in his eyes.

The three were silent a long time, and then Felicie broke it timidly.

"And when do you go, my uncle?"

"To-night, at the darkest hour. I must fill your water-cask from the spring before I leave."

They talked gravely over their plans and hopes until noonday, when Emile took his much-needed rest, and the youthful pair sat down, rather disconsolately it must be admitted, each with a book in hand.

Jules turned to the title-page of the little volume of poems he held. A name was traced there in delicate handwriting—Lady Felicie Languedoc.

"Ah," said he, "I should so much like to know just what she was, and how she looked, that poor Lady Felicie!"

His companion glanced over to the volume to see what it was which fixed his thoughts, and smiled. "Why are you curious? did you know anything about her?" asked she.

"Why, yes. I knew that she was the sole heiress, the pride and hope of the chateau yonder which lies in ruins. It was there, that horrible night you know, that I was so frightfully maltreated. But I did not see her, not even her corpse."

He paused shuddering, and then added, more calmly:

"I should like to know just how she looked, just what was her character. The writing, you see, suggested the thought. I fancy I have a good idea, but I may be mistaken. If she resembled her father she was no beauty."

Felice had averted her conscious face, and was bending it down deeply into her book; she dared not pursue the subject, and presently he was lost in the contents of the volume.

Emile did not reappear until after dark, although in their subterranean dwelling night and day were alike, and the hours were most perceptibly marked by the shortening candles.

Then he shouldered the one empty water cask, and clambered with it up the rude staircase. He returned with it still unfilled, and tried to hide the cloud on his forehead.

"It's of no consequence. On second thought there can be no danger of your needing more water. You will be as prudent as possible, and I mean to relieve you long before you broach the last cask."

Neither suspected that he had attempted to reach the spring and narrowly escaped capture.

He went back to the upper room and listened there anxiously.

"I do believe it is the evil one himself; how else could he vanish so mysteriously?" said one wondering voice.

"The peasants say it was haunted long ago," said another, in equal astonishment.

"Peste! don't you know that was our own doing? Citizen Pierre managed it. But this is beyond belief only for Pierre's assurance that the royalists are hid up somewhere here. Fire at it next time and see what that will do," replied a third.

It was a long time before they went away, and then Emile anxiously listened for the direction of their retreating steps.

"Who would have believed that obstinate Pierre would stick so closely to this idea? They will be sounding the tree next. I see plainly I must see my



[THE PLACE OF REFUGE.]

wits to get out. Ah, I have it! Where is my ghostly dress and light? I'll rig them on a pole with cross arms and carry it in sight of these fellows and set it up. They'll rush forward, believing they have caught the man, and I can slip away unperceived. But I must go to the extreme end of the woods. It will not do to draw farther attention to this spot."

Having matured his plan, he acted upon it promptly.

Carrying the effigy before him, he walked unmolested to the other end of the wood. He heard the first shout of discovery and saw half a dozen forms come rushing toward him.

Setting the pole, which he had taken care to sharpen, firmly in the ground, he slipped behind a tree trunk, and dropping on his knees crawled noiselessly over the mossy earth to the other side.

As he expected, the rush for the supposed capture left the picket line vacated; he lost no moment in clearing it, and as soon as he dared sprang to his feet and ran swiftly.

Extreme care was needed for more than a mile, but when morning broke he was safely in the highway. Once there, he brushed from his dress all signs of his late proceedings, and boldly hailed a market waggon passing on to Frejus.

Before he reached the town he met his comrade, who looked immensely relieved at sight of him.

"Welcome, most valiant Falcon."

"How goes the cause?" responded Emile, while the driver of the waggon eyed him with open-mouthed wonder and a little fear.

"We have some bold spirits. There is worthy Citizen Pierre, you will find him eager for the work."

They proceeded slowly on till they reached the town. There in the market square they saw M. Pierre conversing earnestly with a group of men.

Emile's companion shouted to them,

"Come hither—come and welcome the Falcon. He has arrived at last on a special mission to us!"

The crowd in a moment surrounded them.

Emile, without a moment's hesitation stood up in a cart, and began a furious harangue, somewhat after the fashion of his old club addresses. Inwardly he was stricken with remorse, remembering that those old appeals had lost their power. He had claimed equality, the power of rising by worth of character, the right to be men, the haughty refusal to bend the neck of slaves; but now the wild heart of lawlessness asked for nothing but revenge and triumph, blood and crime. His words were eloquent, and he took care to refrain from appeals to their brutality, but he dwelt adroitly on the watchwords "Equality, liberty,

and all around applauded very heartily as he came down.

"You are just the man we want," cried M. Pierre, coming forward with outstretched hands.

Emile could scarcely control his shudder of disgust, but he shook hands heartily, and answered, with the most apparent delight,

"I am ready for the work. The whole people must come forward—and, behold France is free! Might you be the loyal worker for the people my comrade has been speaking of—are you Citizen Pierre?"

"The very one; and I am proud to meet the Falcon."

Arm in arm M. Pierre and Emile walked into a restaurant for breakfast.

"I'm on the scent of a nice brace of aristocrats," said the former, confidently, as he disposed of one huge morsel after another; "they escaped when the chateau was burnt in the most mysterious way, but I shall have them yet. I shall expect much help from your sagacity. You people in Paris must have got well trained by this time. How go affairs?"

"Prosperously; there is not the slightest doubt Louis will be beheaded, and the Austrian wife will follow. There is only one danger. We may get the tide so strong it may sweep some of its helpers away too. The Mountain Party and the Jacobins are already fighting each other. I promised to start the flame here, but you seem to have it well performed, and I see not but I can speedily return. Why don't you go back with me, Citizen Pierre?"

"Willingly, brave Falcon, if I have caught my birds, but otherwise I must stick to this spot. I know they are still about the place, and I must watch my nets."

"You seem to have great interest in succeeding?"

"To be sure. I have double motives—gain and revenge. I haven't told you there is a girl in the case, have I? That gives extra zest to the adventure."

Emile swallowed his disgust and ire as best he might, and with some trivial excuse left M. Pierre to finish his breakfast. It had seemed to him he should stiffen if he breathed the same air with the villain.

He found himself the object of much awe and reverence. One who had passed through so many Parisian tragedies, and whose reputation as a revolutionary orator was so widespread, might well draw the attention of all.

It was a sore trial for him to speak now. The terrible perversion of his former efforts made his heart heavy under similar attempts. He had seen for himself what revolution meant and he was almost

ready to accept the old evils patiently, in lieu of this maddened convulsion, whatever purification might eventually come from it.

But he had set his task before him, and Emile had all his life been used to self-sacrifice and self-struggling. He was not the man to blench or falter. He became the lion of Frejus, and M. Pierre was almost ready to be jealous of his popularity.

The days wore on from a week to a month, and still Emile found himself hampered on all sides, and bound hand and foot by press of circumstances.

His heart sickened as he thought of the long delay, the torture of watching and waiting in that underground retreat.

He was nearly frantic with alarm as he heard M. Pierre confidently broaching the plan of hunting for caves or burrows in the forest, declaring he would dig it all over before he gave up his search.

And still no plan for their escape had occurred to him.

His very popularity increased the difficulty—he had no private hours, every movement he made was noted; he desperately gave out notice that he was sent for to Paris, and made ostensible preparations for departure.

That very day came M. Pierre jubilant and sanguine.

"Wait a little, Falcon, and I can go with you after I catch my prey."

"You have remarkable faith, citizen, to hold so firmly to the belief that the little forest contains fugitives. I confess I should have given it up long ago."

"Oh, no, not if your faculties were sharpened with the thirst for revenge. At last I am rewarded. The watchers last night detected a man stealing toward the spring of water in the centre of the forest. One caught him fairly, but he wrestled with them, escaped, and in the same strange way vanished. It has happened twice before. They are foxes. I give them due credit, but I shall discover their burrow yet. I have sent for tools, and I'll dig over the whole ground and cut down every tree but I will unearth them."

"Success to you, citizen," answered Emile, but he longed to leap upon him and throttle the exultant villain.

Left alone, Emile sat a long time with his head drooping into his hands.

Something must be done, and that right speedily. He sprang up at length with a brightened face and began examining his pistols.

After that he went out to find his coadjutor.

(To be continued.)



[A MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.]

WINIFRED WYNNE,

THE GOLDSMITH'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Lost Coronet," "One Sparkle of Gold," etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Your eye is like the star of eve,
And sweet your voice as seraph's song.
Yet not your heavenly beauty gives
The heart with passion soft to glow;
Within your heart a voice there lives
It bids you hear the tale of woe.
And therefore love I you, sweet Genevieve.

"Are you going to depart, Countess Sybil? It will be like an eclipse of the sun in our dark climate," whispered Clarence Seymour in the ears of the fair young foreigner, taking advantage of her position in the recess of a large low window-seat for an unobserved dialogue.

Sybil looked up with a beautiful flush that had something of softer pleasure than gratified vanity in its expression.

"I wonder why you cavaliers always fancy we simple damsels believe in your pretty speeches," she said, archly. "It is so much trouble for you to compose them, and we are obliged to simper, and seem credulous and flattered, or else—what I am doing now."

"And what is that, sweet Sybil?" he asked, with a half-cynical smile.

"Speaking very rude discourtesy," she returned, "doubting the sincerity of your declarations, my lord." Clarence shook his head reproachfully.

"If I were to protest too much it would be far more suspicious," he said. "Why should you doubt what I said just now? Do you think yourself so unattractive?—or me so obtuse that I cannot appreciate your charms?"

She was silent for a few moments, but more than once her eyelids were raised to his face, then lowered with lightning rapidity.

"Perhaps both; perhaps neither," she said, briefly.

"Now you deserve your name; you are speaking oracles," he returned, smiling, though there was a decidedly increased interest in his look and tone as he spoke.

"And you are no sphinx, or you would read it aright," she said, quickly.

"I pretend to no such gift," he remarked, gravely.

"But I do claim sincerity and honour as my at-

tributes. Countess, you do me injustice by doubting me."

"Oh, no, I do nothing so serious," she said, more lightly. "I simply blame your sex for the practice of talking hypocrisy while they are, I daresay, meaning very truly. Now, to go back to the trifling origin of this talk, I know perfectly well that neither you, nor any one else, very likely, will remember that I was in existence three weeks, or at the very most three months hence."

Lord Clarence was perhaps conscience-stricken, for he remained silent for a few minutes.

"At any rate you would ensure a longer memory on my part now," he replied. "You have twice shown yourself no common character, Countess Sybil. Once you animated me to what you deemed a duty; now you show that you think and feel far differently to most of your sex and age."

"And therefore I am unpleasant. You never like such masculine daring in a woman," she said, quickly. The shot told unpleasantly.

Perhaps the arrow was more true than she had intended, for Clarence had winced under the half-scoffing, half-ad truth with which she had parried his light homage.

"There is no unvarying rule, fair lady," he answered, at last. "The same high spirit that prompts the biting jest will nerve the heart to brave deeds that a softer nature would shrink from attempting."

Sybil's eyes were fixed on his as she said, in a sudden though low tone:

"Yet that scarcely applied, I suppose, to the girl who came to my rescue when I was burning, my lord?"

The blood rushed strongly up to the very roots of the young nobleman's hair, though he could himself scarcely have defined the cause.

"I am scarcely sufficiently acquainted with the— with Mistress Winifred Wynne, I mean—to decide what her habitual mood may be. It might only have been a sudden impulse that prompted her, quite distinct from the courage that animates a high-born maiden," he went on, as if lashing himself up to the point to which Sybil's words in a measure tended.

"You forget she has been trained up by Lady Churchill. I intend to pay her a farewell visit before I leave England," she returned, with more unrestrained archness than she had yet indulged in. "Shall I convey any message from you, my lord, implying your interest in her peculiar characteristics?" she added, with a winning glance of softened gaiety from her liquid eyes.

"I will only pray you not to mention my name, for assuredly it can be of no interest to her, countess," returned the young man, eagerly. "It would but continue the false stimulus that has been given to the young person's ideas."

Sybil laughed gaily.

"Poor Winifred! What a harsh censor you would be, Lord Clarence, if any question of mésalliance came before you! And yet there have been many high nobles who have married maidens of low degree," she went on, musingly.

"And been unhappy and despised most probably," he replied, sharply. "As well mate an eagle and a homely goldfinch and suppose they would be happy and in accord."

A warm vermillion came over Sybil's face. Her heart beat joyfully, though she despised herself for the lightness that the young nobleman's words seemed to give suddenly to its pulsations. At least, the strange fancies she had conceived were unfounded, Winifred's fascinations, of which she had herself felt the power, had failed to cast any spell over the proud young nobleman, and she could afford to be generous in her gratitude and praises now.

"Command me to the justice of your sex when you can be guilty of such similes, my lord. Fancy comparing Winifred, with her refined delicacy and beauty, to a 'homely goldfinch,' she said, holding up her hands playfully in deprecating wonder.

"You are as unlike your sex in this as in many other qualities," returned Clarence. "You can praise a young and pretty woman with genuine admiration, which so few can bring themselves to do. It is but deepening the wound, after all, to show yourself so peerless," he added, gravely.

Sybil was flattered, perhaps more than flattered, at the words which should have implied so much; but yet she missed the warmth, the genuine ring of truth. There was not the spontaneous, irresistible burst of passion in such expressions. Perhaps Clarence Seymour admired, perhaps he might even think of wooing, but in her heart she felt that he did not love her, and she was too conscious that her heart was his.

Proud and handsome, well-born and well-dowered, the heiress of the De Courcys had bestowed the rich treasure of her affection unasked—it might be unwished, unvalued by the possessor. And yet Sybil De Courcy had claims and attractions which would aid her almost surely in the conquest she was so anxious to win.

The very difficulty gave her courage.

Would she be distanced in the race by a plebeian girl, with only the soft and nameless charm that womanly weakness gave?

A scornful smile crossed the proudly curved lips of the young countess at the thought.

Then a fresh and animated brightness came over her whole air and look.

"If I do praise," she said, "it is sorely against the grain, though my conscience drives me to speak even more than truth where I fear to do less than justice."

"I do not understand you," he replied, in some perplexity.

"Perhaps not," she returned. "Do you not know that women are riddles and that it must be a wonderful sphinx who can read their real meaning? But there is one key," she said, "that avails as an 'Open Sesame' to the heart, and without that it will avail little to attempt the interpretation."

Lord Clarence gazed at her inquiringly.

"And what is that key? Where is it to be procured fair countess?"

Sybil laughed disdainfully.

"Oh, if you do not possess it it is vain to ask the mystery," she replied. "It is like all other spells, it works unseen and unsuspected. I shall not give you any farther clue to enlighten your bewilderment, my lord."

And a gay smile was flung like a parting arrow as she moved determinedly away from the spot.

Clarence Seymour did not attempt to follow.

Perhaps the very tantalishment of the girl's whole manner tended to fix her image more indelibly on his mind.

Beautiful, gay, high-born, and as he suspected not by any means indifferent to himself, the young nobleman could scarcely account for his own semi-indifference to her charms or in preferring his suit to one so adapted for his bride.

But then rose before him all the hazy mists that surrounded his position. Should his brother die—as was an almost certain contingency—and the Marquisate of Montferret become his heirloom, then there could be no bar to his wooing the noblest and the loveliest in the land.

But, if not, what then?

Strange and unlooked-for contingencies might happen. The hopeless invalid might rally, or at least linger on in his present languid debility. And Clarence Seymour hated himself that such an event brought anything but joy to his heart. Yet the dangers and the contingencies that surrounded him were grave enough to cause such weakness in one who from childhood had been accustomed to consider the brother who stood between him and the proud heritage as a mere shadow that must inevitably pass away.

Five years! Ah, that term would fly away ere he was aware of its swift course. And then what could await him save dishonour and ruin?

It was no pleasing reverie that absorbed him after Sybil left him. Yet to any casual observer there could have been no doubt as to its nature.

The beautiful young heiress must occupy the heart and thought of one so young and so chivalrous.

"Your approaching departure spreads a gloom over us all; but there is certainly one victim more overwhelmed than all the rest," laughed Lord St. John, near whom Sybil accidentally found herself.

"Yourself, of course, my lord," said Sybil, carelessly. "I sympathise with you from my very heart."

"Perhaps you would not be far from the truth, countess," replied St. John, meaningly. "You may have more share in my disquiet than you can suspect just now. Have you any idea that your whereabouts may be foreseen even by those who are not privileged to enter into your confidence?"

Sybil's colour rose.

"I do not suppose that I am of sufficient importance for any such pains to be taken as to inquire into my wanderings," she returned, laughingly.

"I am not going to bandy pretty speeches, fair lady," returned the young statesman, "simply because it might do you a cruel harm to deceive you as to my meaning."

Sybil flushed like a blazing flame, and her eyes flashed steel on the unmoved speaker.

"Really, my lord, this is either intentional or unconscious insolence," she said, proudly. "I assure you it is not of the very slightest consequence to me what is your meaning or your thoughts about my movements. Permit me to pass," she added, as he stood in the narrow doorway that she was about to go through towards the next saloon.

"Not till I have explained myself," he said, in a lower tone than he had yet used. "Countess Sybil, you are young and enthusiastic, and, as I believe,

without natural protectors to guide you in safety. It is known far better than you imagine what are the hopes and plans of which you are to be the tool. Do not dream of their success. It never can be possible for the temper of the nation to change, and above all in the way that is expected by your friends. A doubtful pretender can never be a great nation's king. Now I have spoken as plainly as I dare, perhaps you will blame me as insolent or rebellious. I can bear the censure for the present."

And Lord St. John drew aside, with a low bow, to permit the girl to pass.

It was a curious evening, that farewell fête for the young foreigner.

The two deepest instincts of her nature were attacked—her love for Clarence Seymour and her romantic loyalty for her chosen sovereign.

It was enough to make her start back for the future when such phantoms stood in her path, and the sunlight only served to show forth their hideousness in more exaggerated proportions.

She went on, almost unheeded, through the gathered and busy throng, who were at the moment crowding towards the supper-rooms, to which the loud peal of a harsh gong had summoned them.

The countess had so determinedly abandoned the companions with whom she had been conversing, and was at the moment so rapidly making her way to a fixed point, that it did not occur to any cavalier to offer to her his escort on the occasion, and so it happened that she reached the very extremity of the suite of rooms, and stood on a low, large balcony that overarched the large gardens of the house.

It was a relief to step out there in the quiet, cool shade, to feel for the time free from constraint or fear of observation—free to think and sigh, and, if might be, to shake under the weary depression that stole over her spirit.

She could not have told how long she was in that quiet dusk, still less have traced back that train of thought which passed, like a tidal stream, through her brain. She did but retain one harassing, irritating idea that, in some inexplicable way, the plebeian goldsmith's daughter—the fair young Winifred Wynne—was like the cross-threads of a web on her fate—doomed to mar her plans, to disappoint her desires, to snatch from her the dearest prizes in the race of life's career.

So completely was she engulphed by the fancy that haunted her like a shadowy ghost, too impalpable to assume any definite form, that she was not aware of the near neighbourhood of an observer of her thoughtful abstraction. But there was a figure there, half-concealed in the partial darkness, and when all seemed still within the mansion, it stole slowly and gradually from its hiding-place till it stood beside the young and all unconscious girl.

At last the almost inaudible noise that the near neighbourhood of a living, breathing being causes awakened her to a suspicion that she was not alone, and, with a quick step, she proceeded to return to the protection of the house, from which she was as it were cut off; but ere she had taken two steps towards the glass door, through which she had emerged, a low voice said, softly:

"Stay, lady; do not be afraid. I would speak with you for a moment, but only for your good; you need have no fear."

Sybil was certainly no coward, yet a chill uneasiness seized her as she listened to the strange tones.

"I cannot remain here, with a stranger," she said, hastily. "I shall be missed; I must go in. You can have nothing which need be a secret from others to tell a stranger."

"Pardon me, lady, you are no stranger to me, though as yet I may be unknown to you," returned the stranger, drawing nearer to the spot where she still stood spell-bound. "And I should not have risked being here, nor intruded on your solitude, if I could have addressed you in the ordinary way."

"Then tell me, quickly, who you are, and what you want; every moment is precious," said Sybil, eagerly.

"I know it, but I cannot run into danger so quickly, young lady," replied the man; "and before I explain who I am it is as well to ask you for a promise to hold all the confidence secret, even if you do not see fit to enter into what I have to offer. Will you promise this? and then I will not keep you a needless moment."

"Yes, yes; that is, if there is nothing really wrong in what you have to say," she answered. "I dare not conceal what might bring danger to others," she said, doubtfully.

"That will depend on yourself," the stranger returned. "If you decline the business altogether you

will be utterly clear from any connection with me or what I may choose to do. Now, will you give me your word on the subject?"

There was a species of romance in the occurrence that fascinated Sybil even more than any idea of advantage from the strange interview, and she could not bring herself to reject the chance of solving so singular a mystery.

"I will trust you so far," she said. "I will not betray you, even if I do not attach credit to what you may say. I cannot suppose you would trust me—a woman—with any very important and deadly secret," she went on, hurriedly, as if to reassure her doubts, even against her better judgment.

"That is enough," he said, quickly. "I can take the word of a high-born lady, though I do not pretend to believe much in their virtue of birth. Countess, my errand concerns one as lowly born as myself, and also you and one you love, or I am much deceived in any evidence of such a feeling," he went on, in a voice which Sybil could well fancy betokened a bitter sarcasm in heart and lip.

"You are bold," she said, haughtily; "but go on. I promised to listen patiently."

"Yes," he replied, quickly. "And you would not bring yourself to do otherwise on such a subject, young lady. If you like I will speak more plainly. The persons I allude to are Winifred Wynne and the young nobleman with whom you spoke but now."

"And how are they connected?" she asked, in a trembling voice.

"How? Why, by one of the feelings that are the sole bond for human beings—love and hate. I do not think you will doubt which is likely to exist in the case we wot of."

"I should not deem it could be either," she answered, quickly; "they are too removed in all respects from each other for them to come in such contact."

"You are more foolish than I believed then," said the stranger; sharply, "you know better, young mistress—you know that love makes all equal, and I tell you that whether they know it or not the two have such a feeling for each other, and it is for you and me to stop it before too late."

"You and me?" said the girl, scornfully. "Surely you have forgotten yourself."

"Ah, yes, I forgot the foolish pride of your order," rejoined the man, hurriedly. "Perhaps you would rather indulge it at the expense of your wishes. I care not—I can serve my own ends in some other way. Good night."

"No, no! Stop! You are too hasty," said Sybil, as she could distinguish the rising of her companion's figure in the dim light from the windows. "What do you want me to do or say?" she asked, eagerly.

"I want you to promise to second me in what I may see fit to attempt in order to divide the two ill-matched ones," he returned, stopping abruptly in his motion to the house. "Hark ye, I love Winifred far better than you silken-nurtured puppets of fashion know how to do, and I am resolved at any cost to separate her from the hated rival whom you equally desire to win. Now, it is possible we may accomplish this together, though it would have been impossible alone, and I am come to propose such an alliance to you, countess. Are you willing?"

The girl shrank involuntarily. She felt the truth of the man's words. Every tone spoke a bitter earnestness that she could not doubt was heartfelt to the core.

She was tempted to the utmost of her strength where so coveted an object was in view, but yet woman's delicacy and chivalrous honour stood between her and her weakness.

"What would you do? Would it injure either?" she said, falteringly. "Surely it could not be accomplished without some risk to both."

He gave a low, half-scornful laugh.

"Do you mean to do you and me, or to both the persons in question, countess?" he asked. "But I think I know which you mean. You are afraid for the man who would trifle with and deceive you without thought if it suited his purpose, and I assure you in return that I am quite as much concerned for the girl I mean to call wife as you can be for such a dutiful suitor. Anyway he will be in danger if he attempts to wed Winifred or do worse than wed her. He would find his life not worth much, I vow. And as he can but be in a peril which you may deliver him from, why not gain the reward? Speak, young lady; you are no weak, frivolous damsel to shrink and shiver at a trifle, and I cannot wait longer. You can need no farther delay. It is but a question whether your suitor shall be in peril, without

your aid and care, or whether you shall deliver him and reap the reward," he added, musingly.

He had spoken rapidly, yet Sybil had time to weigh his words as he went on, and to revolve in her own mind all the alternative that was put before her.

The choice was momentous, but it was quickly and resolutely made—what were to be its results?

"You are right," she said calmly. "I am not weak and I will accept the office you request me to fulfil. We must meet where we can speak more freely. Should you need any farther speech of me, I will arrange for it on receipt of a billet from you. But I do not even know your name," she said, quickly. "I presume you are an acquaintance of Master Wynne."

"Yes," he replied, "I am his elected son. My name is Adrian Meister, lady, but you shall have a safer title when I want to communicate with you, which shall not be needlessly risked. Now I wish you a pleasant end to your revel," he added, sarcastically, "and a peaceful night."

And in a moment he had swung hurriedly to another balustrade and disappeared in the darkness.

Sybil De Courcy still remained in the solitude of that low balcony, her mind all confused by the strange interview that had just taken place.

She had yielded to the tempter.

Her strong, ungoverned Southern passions were all too strong for her sense of honour or gratitude.

She owed her life to Winifred Wynne, yet she could persuade herself that she was rather doing her service than repaying her debt by black ingratitude.

Lord Clarence could never marry a plebeian citizen's daughter, and the truest kindness to the misguided girl was to prevent her yielding to an ill-omened and useless affection, which would only hinder her prosperity and happiness in life.

Such was Sybil's flattering thought in that dark hour.

Alas for those comments! The brain that could thus deceive itself was as clouded as that starless night, and the storms which the tempest of irregular passions conjured up were as dangerous as the winds or the foaming ocean.

CHAPTER XIX.

"We seem doomed to meet, Mistress Winifred. Either I am extremely blundering and intrusive on your privacy, or else there is a presiding fairy over gold as well as flowers," observed Clarence Seymour as he was abruptly ushered into a small chamber which served to connect the office of the goldsmith with the household apartments, and which Winifred had lately occupied as a small retiring apartment for her feminine occupations.

The spinet, to which at the moment of the young gentleman's entrance she was accompanying her own care, rich voice, the embroidery frame where her fairy fingers wrought bright many-coloured silks into a glittering beauty, the book-table, where a few, very few volumes of a value seldom known in modern days were carefully preserved, all spoke of feminine taste and culture.

When Clarence entered the girl was touching the soft-toned spinet and striking a low, graceful accompaniment to her fresh young voice in a little-known Italian melody. She ceased abruptly as the door opened and courtesied with a maidenly reserve to the new comer.

"You must pardon the ignorance of the rustic youth, my lord," she said, apologetically. "He has but recently returned from a long absence to his service and was not aware that any change had taken place in the arrangement of his master's rooms. My father has kindly permitted me to occupy this chamber, while he has taken one more separate from the house in its place for his own needs."

Clarence had time to study the exquisite grace and beauty of the speaker during the explanation.

Winifred's was indeed a style of loveliness that, like a strain of music or a fine painting, needed full acquaintance to comprehend its full charm and variety, and the entire absence of the slightest vestige of forward display only harmonized with the purity and chaste refinement of the goldsmith's only child.

"I entreat you not to let me disturb you, Mistress Winifred," returned Clarence, quickly, "or I shall at once retire and await your father's coming in the street, since the offices are full of applicants for varied necessities at your father's hands. What a proud position it must be for a man to be so besieged, do you not think so, Mistress Winifred?"

There was the same touch of sarcasm in his tone that at once attracted and daunted the young, sensitive nature.

"No," she said, "I do not, nor, I imagine, can you seriously believe it, Lord Clarence."

The young man felt a reproach in the calm, proud tone that did not waste one word in answer to his more than the rebuke required.

"May I ask what can be your objection to such laudable benefits to others, Mistress Winifred?" he resumed, after a moment's pause.

She hesitated.

"Can it be 'benefits' when it is a matter of mere barter?" she said, timidly, raising her sparkling eyes to his face, with a kind of childlike inquiry rather than actual assertion.

"If they are of a character and a value which can but be attained in such a manner I suppose it is so," he answered. "As well say that a physician does not confer service because he is paid for his skill as that the dealings of your father have no price to the luckless one he assists."

She shook her head gravely.

"Health is difficult to give. It must be a blessing and cannot be too richly paid for, but money is so different and may be a curse."

He fairly laughed at the grave young philosopher.

"Wait till you have more years and more experience, Mistress Winifred, and you will think differently. Nothing can be accomplished in this world without gold, and poverty is an evil and a crime. Would you not fear to risk it if it were offered to you?" he continued, watching her thoughtful face.

"No," she said, quietly. "I had rather have something to struggle for and to win than mere enjoyment of luxury."

There was an elevation in the speaking face which Clarence Seymour could read and appreciate, albeit he determinedly steered himself against estimating it at its true price.

"I presume it is as we are to the manner born," he replied, lightly. "There are so many uses in wealth that you cannot understand that I sometimes fancy it is the only essential in life, because it carries all else in its train."

"No—no—no; you surely mistake, my lord," she exclaimed, quickly. "It is no price for the best happiness of life, since the lowest natures can possess it, and they can never taste the blessings you speak of. You are but jesting," she added, coldly, "with the goldsmith's daughter when you talk thus."

"Forgive me," he said, earnestly, watching as she spoke the involuntary moisture that rose in her eye at the mortifying idea. "You do me and yourself wrong if you think I would willingly wound your feelings by idle talk, which, to speak truly, is rather the result of peculiar circumstances which you can little suspect than perhaps the real instinct and opinion of my nature."

It was like a sunbeam breaking through clouds was the bright smile which beamed rather in Winifred's eye than on her lips at the words.

She looked so sweetly feminine, so relieved at the amends which justified her belief in her companion's real sentiments, that it served as the most meritorious and flattering compliments which could be imagined to Clarence's self love.

"Then, since you believe me, permit me thus to seal my peace," he said, slightly bending one knee in the courtly fashion of the time and lifting her hand to his lips with a respectful courtesy that she could not rationally resent. Even at the moment when Winifred's cheek was warmed, as it were, with this sudden and unexpected advance from the formal and quiet young noble, and her hand bashfully withdrawing from his clasp, ere it well escaped from the touch of his lips, the door opened and the graceful, high-bred figure of Sybil De Courcy advanced into the room.

It was a tableau worth an artist's study. The quick recoil, the crimson blush, the innocent shame that mantled like guilt over every feature and the shrinking form of the abashed Winifred, the haughty surprise and anger that sparkled in Sybil's dark eyes, and the half-resolute, half-anxious attitude of the young nobleman, were each a revelation of feeling and emotions more powerful than words could have betrayed.

The countess was the first to speak.

"I really must ask pardon for my intrusion," she said, haughtily, "but I was requested to seek Mistress Winifred here, and I had no right or wish to disturb so touching a scene."

"You need not disturb yourself, countess," said Clarence, who had by this time collected his ideas, and who was of no nature to be daunted by a woman without actual right to question his actions. "I was about to take my leave of Mistress Winifred

after first making my peace with her for a somewhat discourteous assertion of opinion. I leave her with pleasant and kindly company, and wish you both the enjoyment of your colloquy," he went on, with a low bow to both the fair girls that had neither gallantry nor sarcasm in its profound gravity.

And in a few seconds he had left the apartment.

Sybil seated herself with the air of an indignant, scornful queen rather than a guest.

"I presume it is the custom among the citizens of London to allow their daughters to receive male guests," she began. "But you must pardon me, Mistress Winifred, for betraying some surprise at such an interview, which is so contrary to our habits in our more exclusive class of life."

Winifred's carriage was well nigh as proud as the jealous Sybil's own at the taunting words, and her soft voice and refined bearing gave an additional force to the calm reproach which her reply contained.

"I do not pretend to belong to your noble class, Countess Sybil," she said; "but I presume that it is your custom to show courtesy in your own house. It was perfectly unexpected by me that Lord Clarence Seymour was ushered into my sitting-room—which, indeed, has only very recently been fitted for my use," she added, with a kind of apologetic glance around. "Probably that caused the mistake."

Sybil had coolly taken a sort of inventory of the apartment during Winifred's speech.

Perhaps she preferred avoiding the expressive eyes that conveyed an unconscious superiority to her pride of rank and haughty spirit. Perhaps she was anxious to see what amount of refinement and luxury could be commanded by the plebeian goldsmith's daughter.

Assuredly there was nothing that could shock or be repugnant to the most pampered taste, and Winifred seemed to spread as it were an atmosphere of chaste elegance around all that came under her influence and control.

"And of course that courtesy extended to the permitting this favoured guest to cross your hand," she said, more lightly, as if to soften the bitterness of the words. "However, that is not my business of course, though I was, as might be supposed, somewhat startled to intrude on such an unusual scene. I am no duenna, Mistress Winifred, and my errand here this day is to pay you my bounden tribute of gratitude for your service to me, which I hold in grateful remembrance," she went on, changing her tone to one of dignified earnestness.

"The thanks have been already more expressed than I needed, countess," replied the girl, calmly. "The best return you can make is never to name it more, if indeed you do wish to study my pleasure."

"You will not be disturbed by me again very soon, Mistress Winifred," replied Sybil, sharply. "I am come to bid you farewell, and at the same time praying your acceptance of this slight mark of my gratified remembrance of that unlucky night."

As she spoke she held out to the shrinking hand of the wondering girl a small miniature set in precious stones, which, when Winifred's wondering glance examined the features, bore the likeness of a lovely though not very young female, which brought a vague, half-confused memory to the girl's mind.

It was not Sybil herself, yet the style and the hair and eyes and complexion were not altogether different to the young foreigner, and the girl looked from one to the other face in bewildered doubt.

"I had rather not. It is not your portrait, countess, and it can bear no value for me," she said, withdrawing the hand in which Sybil had pressed the precious case.

"If it is not mine it is that of a near and much-honoured friend," replied the countess. "And, look! you can see that there is a secret within that adds to its value."

She touched a small spring in the ring from which it was suspended as she spoke and again extended it to her companion's gaze.

It was another portrait, exquisitely painted, and it brought the hot blood to Winifred's unwilling cheeks, though she would have given a year's life to have stilled the betraying pulses.

It was Clarence Seymour! Yes, his noble and intellectual, though perhaps not strictly handsome features were there portrayed to the very life.

The speaking eyes and lips that could either express scorn and sarcasm, such as half-daunted and half-attracted in its power and wit, or else a soft and manly tenderness which could melt and win at its pleasure, the noble brow, the fine carriage of the head were all painted with wonderful fidelity and spirit.

Winifred could scarcely forbear clamping the trinket in her hand, so that her gaze might be more prolonged and fixed, but she controlled the impulse with an effort that cost her more than many a hero's deed.

"No, that is not for me to possess, countess," she said, proudly. "It is no gift for a maiden to receive. You are but jesting, but it is not a womanly deed," she went on, indignant delicacy giving strength and resentment to her look.

"Nay, you are wrong; you may assuredly take such a gift from me, said the countess, with a significant smile.

Winifred shook her head in silence; she did not choose to risk the emotion that her voice might too surely have betrayed.

"Now you are angry, or you are obtuse," said Sybil laughing gaily. "Can you suppose that I should possess a portrait of a young cavalier like that, except I had a right to it. You must have very singular ideas of the damsels of the highest order," she added, proudly.

"Nay, not so," returned Winifred, who had by this time controlled her agitation, "but I can certainly not understand that if it were as you say that you would give it to a stranger."

"Oh, scarcely a stranger when you saved my life," replied the young countess, quickly. "And if such a bond exists as you may fairly suppose my life is dear enough to him for such a reward."

Winifred's lip curled involuntarily with instinctive contempt.

"Pardon me, lady, I am dull, I daresay, or else really ignorant, but I suppose I do not comprehend that such things can be," she replied. "Of course, the Lord Clarence Seymour may be your betrothed husband. It is natural enough, but not that you should give his portrait to—"

"A rival do you mean, young maiden?" laughed Sybil, scornfully.

And there was a genuine jealousy and bitterness in the scorn of her tone that added point to the words.

Winifred started to her feet, every feature and look instinct with outraged delicacy and pride.

"Lady," she said, "I would fain hope that you know not what is the insult you would offer to one to whom you profess obligations. Let the matter rest here. I ask nothing at your hands save silence and peace."

The high-born foreigner shrank abashed before the dignified rebuke of the plebeian citizen's daughter.

But there were still powerful motives at work within that warred strangely with her better feelings.

"You place yourself in a false position, Mistress Winifred," she said, coldly. "I am your debtor, as I know, but still I would scarcely say that you were entitled to speak and to act as my equal. And I offer to you this picture, which combines my own and Lord Clarence's features, even though I confess that the portrait of the lady was taken of a relative whom I am said to strongly resemble, and who for powerful reasons I place in the front as it were of the less openly acknowledged miniatures. It is only as a gift which I thought might be well valued by you that I offer it. I suppose that gold in any shape would scarcely be acceptable to you?" she added, questioningly.

Winifred thrust back as it were the trinket into the countess's extended hand.

"I had rather not speak of such matters," she said, rising from her seat with an air of dignity that well became her graceful, maidenly figure. "I know what is my own belief and feeling, and if I am deceived it is of no importance to you or any one. Countess Sybil, if you, in after days, know sorrow, remember that you have this day cast from you a friend who would gladly have served you in your need; and if happiness and joy be your portion, think with regret that you could outrage one less favoured by fortune. May I ask you now to leave me in peace?"

(To be continued.)

THE EARLDOM OF MAR.—The earldom of Mar has, by the decision of the House of Lords, been adjudicated to the Earl of Kellie. This result has been attained only after a long series of investigations, which go as far back as 1863. Few persons, we take it, are aware of the enormous labour expended in preparing a case for the Committee of Privileges. Even lawyers accustomed to heavy commercial cases will be a little staggered at the voluminousness of the evidence collected; and still fewer, we imagine, would conceive with what sort of arguments the rival

claims are urged. In the Mar case the main question in dispute was whether Queen Mary revived an extinct peerage, or whether she merely declared Lord Erskine to be in 1565—what he was de jure—Earl of Mar; in order to overthrow the former alternative, one of the parties observed that "Je pense plus," was the motto of the Erskines, but that Lord Erskine's motto must have been "Je pense moins," if he, with an ancient barony of his own, deigned to accept a new earldom. Equally curious is the sort of evidence on which the decision turned. One potent piece of evidence wielded by Earl Kellie was the hearsay statement of an English visitor to the Court of Queen Mary. These inquiries are held days for antiquarians, but they leave an unpleasant impression as to the authenticity of claims based on such doubtful evidence.

FRENCH MARRIAGE LAWS.

By the laws of France, a man cannot marry till he has attained the age of eighteen; nor can a woman till she is fifteen. In certain cases, dispensation respecting age may be obtained from the Government.

There must be consent to validate a marriage. A second marriage, when the first husband or wife is living, is absolutely void.

The consent of both father and mother is required by a son under twenty-five years of age, and by a daughter under twenty-one; if the parents disagree as to the consent, that of the father suffices. If the father or mother is dead, or cannot give consent, the consent of one is sufficient. If both are dead, then the grandfather and grandmother take the place of the parents. If the grandfather and grandmother of the same line disagree, the consent of the grandfather suffices; dissent between the two lines carries consent.

When a man has attained his twenty-fifth year, and the woman her twenty-first, both are still bound to ask, by a formal notification, the consent of their parents; and till the man has attained his thirtieth year, and the woman her twenty-fifth, this formal act must be repeated twice, from one month to another; and one month after the formal application it is lawful for the parties to marry, with or without consent. After the age of thirty, it is lawful to marry, in default of consent, a month after one formal notice has been given, which notice must be served upon the father or mother or grandfather by two notaries, or by one notary and two witnesses.

In the event of the parents or ascendants to whom the notification should be made being absent, a copy of the judgment declaring the absence must be produced; or in default of it an acte de notoriété (a declaration before a justice of the peace) drawn up, on the declaration of four witnesses, by the justice of the peace.

So rigid are the marriage laws in France that if these rules are neglected, if the registrar neglects to state in the marriage certificate that the consent of the parents had been obtained, he is liable to a fine of three hundred francs and six months' imprisonment; and when the prescribed notices are not carried out, to a fine of three hundred francs and one month's imprisonment.

Marriage is prohibited between all in the direct line, whether legitimate or illegitimate, and between persons related by marriage in the same line. Marriage is also prohibited between an uncle and a niece; an aunt and a nephew; also between brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, but in the two latter cases the Government can dispense with the prohibition.

Marriage is a civil ceremony in France, and must be celebrated publicly before the registrar of the parish where one of the contracting parties has resided six months. If the parties have not resided six months, the banns must be published at the parish of their former residence. If the contracting parties, or one of them, cannot marry without the consent of another person, the banns must also be published in the parish where such person resides.

A marriage contracted in a foreign country between a Frenchman and a Frenchwoman, and between a French person and a foreigner is valid in France if celebrated according to the forms of the country, provided it has been preceded by the publication of banns and with the consent of parents. If the parties return to France the certificate of marriage must be registered within three months after returning at the place of their abode.

The right of opposing the solemnization of a marriage belongs to a person connected by marriage with one of the two contracting parties. The father, and in default of the father, the mother, and in default of the father and mother, the grandfather and grandmother, may also oppose the marriage; and in default of ascendants, the brother or sister, uncle or aunt. First cousins of full age can also oppose the marriage in the two following cases:—1. When the consent of the family council has not been obtained.

2. When the opposition is founded on the insanity of the proposed husband.

Every reason for opposition must be clearly stated, and the court of first instance decides within ten days. An appeal to a superior court may be made, which appeal is tried ten days after the citation. If the appeal be rejected the opposers, if not ancestors, may be condemned to pay damages.—From the *Civil Laws of France*, by D. M. A. R.

OVERDUE MEN.

There is a being who has caused more trouble to womankind than any other. It is the "fellow" who is always being "met," and thereby keeps anxious females on the watch at windows at all sorts of unholy hours.

How many years of her life does a woman spend looking out of the window for men who are overdue! I have not lived half of my threescore and ten years yet, and I am sure I have wasted time enough in the fruitless operation to have made myself mistress of all the hieroglyphics ever discovered. Only one thing have I learned, that man, like the peasant woman's "watched pot that never boils," never comes when he is looked for; and that hasn't done me any good; for, still, whenever I have occasion, I invite the influence by sitting in a strong draughts with my eyes fixed on the farthest point possible, with visions of hospital ambulances and woful telegrams before my eyes, whenever any one, from my grandfather to my little nephew, doesn't "arrive himself" in proper time.

All women do it, and many thanks they get for their anxiety. You may cry your eyes weak and your nose red, go through all the agonies of hope deferred, become angry, get over your anger to plunge into the depths of woe, make sure that you are bereaved of your best beloved relative, and wait in calm despair to know the worst, and when he comes be he brother, husband, or son, grandfather, uncle, or cousin, perchance a lover, he hasn't the slightest idea of your sufferings, and inquires: "Well, Polly, what's the matter? You look solemn." Solemn! Well, you know enough not to fling yourself into his arms and cry. "The sea has given up its dead," or anything of that sort. You say, "Ah!" in an offended tone, or an unnaturally calm one, and perhaps remark that "dinner was burnt to a crisp four hours ago," or that you have "sat with your bonnet on ready for the concert from seven until nine," and wait for some explanation. It is sometimes vouchsafed, and then generally proves to be—"Met a fellow."

Yes, meeting "a fellow" is reason enough for any amount of staying out. Who is "a fellow." I wonder, that he should outweigh wife, mother, and sweet-heart, daughter, niece, and aunt? Why should "a fellow" have such influence? No one ever sees "a fellow," or hears all his names. He is never produced. Ask after him, and you hear that he is not the sort of fellow to be introduced. He is never brought home. Apparently he is not good enough; but he is important enough to upset a household, to keep meals waiting, to keep people up until midnight; to have met him is ample excuse for anything forgetful or neglectful.

M. K. D.

SOME enormous rabbits are about to be sent with a large number of white and silver gray rabbits to Japan. At present the trade is quite brisk in Leadenhall, owing to the demand for partridges and plovers for exportation, chiefly for New Zealand and Japan.

METHYLATED SPIRITS AS A DRINK.—The love of intoxicating drinks leads to strange perversion of tastes. According to the report of the Inland Revenue Commissioners, a person has been convicted of selling methylated spirits unparified, and only diluted, as a pleasant drink. It seems unaccountable how people can swallow such a disagreeable liquid, but the morbid craving for drink becomes so strong that nothing is too nasty so long as it produces the desired effect.

THE ABOLITION OF THE GAME LAWS BILL.—Mr. Peter Taylor's bill for the Abolition of the Game Laws is exceedingly brief. It contains but one clause, providing that from February 14th, 1877, "All those statutes providing for the protection, preservation, and sale of the wild animals aforesaid—namely, any game whatever, and any woodcock, snipe, quail, or landrail, or any conies, or any deer, shall cease and determine." Then follows a formidable list of laws relating to game which are to be repealed, commencing with the 12th year of the reign of Richard II., and finishing with the 93rd and 94th of Victoria.

A SHARP REBUKE.—The Duke of Cambridge, in his capacity of Commander-in-Chief, was on one occasion passing about among the men in barracks at Dover, and was inquiring, as is his wont, if they had any complaints to make. None had any grievances to tell save one, who was known to his comrades as an habitual grumbler, and who complained that the

ractions served out to him were not fit to be eaten. "Very well, we will see," said the duke, and ordering the soldier's dinner to be brought, he sat down and discussed the viands with an appetite that would have done credit to a farmer. When he had finished he sharply rebuked the astonished soldier and told him he had been well punished by the loss of his dinner.

EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL.—Professor Humphrey, the eminent Professor of Anatomy, at Cambridge University, will have brought a hornet's nest of Good Templars and Permissive Bill people about his ears by his remarks upon the use of alcohol. He strongly condemned the excessive use of alcoholic drinks, even though short of drunkenness, but disclaimed being an advocate of total abstinence, believing that the people of this country could not give up so important an element of diet as alcohol without danger to themselves or their descendants.

A RECIPE FOR A BELLE.—The receipt for fitting out a belle of the moment, is this: Take a lady, roll her once in satin, twice in a gauze scarf, three times in a tulle veil; to all this add twenty yards of garlands of flowers, placed in diamond pattern across the robe; then add the train, or tail, which must be heavy as the other materials are light; it can be made in matelassé or raised flower work; in the middle are to be attached knots, in diamonds or pearls; then cover with gauze butterflies, or lace birds; no sleeves; thus got up, show madame in.

FOURTEEN THOUSAND MILES OF ICE.—The Hudson river ice crop for 1875 has been harvested, and is one of the largest and finest ever gathered. The blocks average 14 inches in thickness, and the total quantity secured is about 2,000,000 of tons, or seventy millions of cubic feet. If this mass of ice were arranged in a single line or beam, 12 inches square, it would have a total length of about fourteen thousand miles, and would reach more than half way around the world. To transport the entire quantity above named simultaneously, in ice carts, each carrying two tons, driven by two horses, driven by one man, would require an army of a million men, two millions of horses, and a million vehicles.

SCIENCE.

POPULAR TREES AS LIGHTNING CONDUCTORS.—Who has not heard of the perils which environ the people who live near popular trees when the lightning rushes to the tall stems and then, glancing off, commits havoc in every direction? M. Colladon, the Geneva physicist, has now published an essay on the subject of turning these trees into properly constituted lightning conductors by inserting in the lower part of the trunk a metallic rod, which he connects with the earth by a chain, so that the fluid cannot leave the tree to dart at any object placed within a short distance, which at present often happens.

ELECTRO-PLATING ON CHINA.—M. Hausen has recently patented in France the following process for electro-plating on a non-conducting material. Sulphur is dissolved in the oil of Lavendula spica to a syrupy consistence. Sesquichloride of gold or sesquichloride of platinum is then dissolved in sulphuric ether, and the two solutions are mingled under a gentle heat. The compound is next evaporated until of the thickness of ordinary paint, when it is applied with the brush to such portions of the china, glass, etc., as are desired to be covered with the electro-metallic deposit. The objects are baked in the usual way before immersion in the bath.

A NEW GAS FOR RAILWAY CARRIAGES.—Experiments have been made on some of the Swiss railways for the purpose of testing a new scheme for the lighting of railway carriages by gas. The trial was first made with a postal wagon, and as its result was completely successful, orders have been given by the Government for the fitting up of several mail carriages with the apparatus. The gas used is made of oil, and as the space occupied is five times less than that of ordinary gas, a carriage can be easily fitted up with a gasometer sufficient for eight hours, light. Three general reservoirs only—say at Bern, Zurich, and Oten—will be required for the supply of all the mail carriages of Switzerland.

ANALYSIS OF ITALIAN WINES.—F. Sestini, G. Del Torre and A. Baidi have analyzed 520 samples from the fine collection of Italian wines at the late Vienna Exhibition. The average amount of alcohol present in these wines is high, about 13 to 14 per cent. of their volume. In very few is it less than 10 per cent. In Sicilian wines it is 16 to 20 per cent., and in one of them (Marsala) it averages 22 per cent. The proportion of free acids, determined with 1-10th of normal alkali, averaged 6 to 7 per 1,000, and even in the sorts richest in free acids (Venetian wines) did not amount to 1 per cent. The amount of residue at 110 deg. C. varied greatly both in the northern and southern wines. In a few samples the proportion

of mineral substances amounted to $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; in some it was 3 to 4 per 1,000; in most, less. In 82 samples of the best wines, the amounts of extractive matter, glucose, glycerine (approximate), and the proportion of the fixed to the free acid were also determined. The Sicilian wines were richest in sugar, giving an average of 13 to 20 per cent. In most of the wines from Central and North Italy the proportion did not exceed 1 to 2 per cent. The proportion of the extractive matter to the sugar was not determined. In a few samples it was found not to exceed 1 to 2 per 1,000, and in the saccharine wines was only $\frac{1}{2}$ per 1,000. The largest percentage of glycerine was in the Sicilian wines, $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The average of volatile acids was about 1 to 2 per 1,000, or $\frac{1}{2}$ of the whole amount of acid present. The volatile acids were present in largest proportion in the aromatic wines.

CURIOSITIES OF WELDING.

There has lately been shown a very interesting specimen of blacksmith work. By means of Schierloh's welding compound, it is alleged that, in one example of a bar of Bessemer steel, five different kinds of iron and steel have been perfectly welded, without changing its shape in the least. The bar is $\frac{1}{2}$ by 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in the cross section.

First, a piece of Bessemer steel, cut from the end of the bar, was welded fast to it again, the heating and welding occupying eight minutes. On the reverse side of the bar a piece of fine cast steel was welded in six minutes. Further along on the bar a piece of blister steel was welded in eight minutes. This same steel cannot be welded with borax, as the high temperature needed with that flux makes it as brittle as cast iron under the hammer. Opposite this a piece of wrought iron was welded in six minutes, and farther along on the bar a piece of cast iron was welded in three minutes. This was a piece of the mould board of a plough. The bar, with its additions, was then ground and polished on the edge, so as to show the points at which the welded metals came into contact. No weld was visible on any one of them, and the difference in the metal could only be told by the colour after polishing. This solves a great many important problems in iron manufacture, among others the welding of Bessemer scrap.

MANUFACTURE OF EXTRACT OF INDIGO.

To make what is generally called sour extract of indigo, mix 5 lbs. of best Bengal indigo in 30 lbs. of strong oil of vitriol. Let it stand five days; then put it in a tub and add 40 gallons of boiling water to it; then filter while hot through strong felt cloth. The filters are usually made this way: A frame like a table top, eight yards long, two yards wide. This frame is divided into four filters. Pieces of wood across are put on the top and made to fit the holes (the shape of bowls, with small holes perforated in them); then the felt cloth is put on the top, and the liquid is put on the filter and filtered through. The sediment at the top is used to colour pottery; that which runs through is put in a tub, and 40 lbs. of common salt added. Digest for six hours; then put on the filters again for four or five days. That which drains through runs away in the sewers; that on the top of the filters is the extract. For these proportions the extract should weigh 80 lbs. This is sour extract of indigo of commerce. To make free extract of indigo, put 100 lbs. of the sour extract in a tub, 12 gallons of water as well. Neutralize the acid in the extract with strong soda ash liquor until it is free from any sour taste; then put on the filters for six days. It should weigh 100 lbs. when it comes off. This is free extract of indigo of commerce.

MAGNETIC RAILWAY RAILS.—M. Heyl, engineer of one of the German railways, in a recent report upon the special section under his charge, calls attention to the development of magnetism in the rails. He says: "I have observed that all the rails are transformed at their extremities, after they have been placed in position a few days, into powerful magnets, capable of attracting and of retaining a key or even a heavier piece of metallic iron. These rails preserve their magnetism even after they have been removed, but they lose it gradually. When in position, however, the magnetism is latent, only becoming free when the chairs are removed and disappearing again when they are replaced. Hence it is necessary to assume that two opposite poles come together at each junction, and that each rail is a magnet, the poles being alternately reversed throughout the line. This production of magnetism in the rails examined is undoubtedly attributable to the running of the trains, and to the shocks, friction, etc., thereby produced. The hypothesis of electric currents, induced or direct, must be rejected, since it is negatived by experiments upon the subject made with suitable apparatus. Although the interest attaching to the fact above stated is at present purely scientific, it is

not impossible that the magnetism thus developed may exercise an influence actually beneficial upon the stability of the roadway, increasing the adherence to the rails and the friction. It is possible, also, that the magnetic currents may be stronger at the moment of the passage of the trains than either before or after. If this be so, the observations may acquire a still higher practical importance."

CHILDREN AND DOGS.

"Dogs is healthy for children" say the old wives, and not without some foundation in fact. The influence of these lively and affectionate playmates of childhood is very happy: so much so that we have sometimes thought that a boy who has never had a pet dog has been cheated out of half the enjoyment and no small part of the moral culture of infancy. But dogs have bad tricks, and, unless properly trained, are apt to be anything but "healthy" for children. They express their affection in a very bad way.

We know that it is a common opinion that there is something wonderfully wholesome about a dog's tongue, and that his natural habit of licking the objects of his affection is rather to be encouraged than repressed. Nevertheless one of the first requirements in a dog for a child's pet is that he be trained to emulate prudent humanity and restrain his tongue. It is not "healthy," whatever the old wives may say. This, setting aside the question of rabies altogether. A much more common affection of dogs is a tape worm, for whose development both men and dogs have to contribute. Its immature or cysticercal stage is spent in the human body, often causing great mischief; then it migrates to the dog, completes its development, and makes provision for a new crop to infect humanity, forming cysts or hollow tumours, in various parts of the body.

The full-grown worm is the smallest tapeworm known, only about a quarter of an inch in length. The embryo is often as small as one two-hundredth of an inch; yet, according to Cobbold, death has been caused by a single individual lodged in the brain. At a late meeting of the Australian Microscopical Society, Mr. Sidney Gibbons exhibited specimens recently taken from a human subject, and said that there could be no doubt that they were frequently implanted in children as a consequence of allowing dogs to lick their hands and faces. It is a nasty practice at best, and a pet dog's first lesson should be to keep his tongue to himself.

THE MARCH OF CIVILIZATION.—A packet of fifty bonnets, the latest broadbrim fashion, has just been forwarded to the Shah of Persia for the use of his ladies; the bill was 5,000*l*. Western civilization is finding its way to Teheran.

VISIT OF KING OSCAR OF SWEDEN TO THE CZAR.—It is stated that King Oscar of Sweden will pay a visit to the Czar at St. Petersburg towards the end of April should the Gulf of Finland be then free from ice. If not, the visit will be postponed till June, after the Czar's return from his annual stay in Germany.

FALLEN DEITIES.—A rather ludicrous scene took place in Paris at the Laundress's Mid-Lent Festival. They started, to the number of thirty-six, dressed up as gods and goddesses, in a triumphal car. The car, turning a street corner, was upset, and their godships were sent sprawling. Jupiter lost his lightning, Mars his helmet, Saturn his sickle. But they were not much hurt, and the Olympian ball came off as usual.

THE DOWAGER QUEEN OF THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.—Queen Emma, of the Sandwich Islands, has been receiving hokopos of her many friends and relatives. The Queen Dowager is very popular, has a heart as warm as the climate she inhabits and the most beautiful eyes in the world. We do not use this as a piece of gallantry, but because truths handsomely set are the brightest jewels which can adorn the name of a noble woman.

LOVE.—In its first approaches, ere it has assumed any definite character it is full of light and beauty. Its hidden agency fills the soul with ineffable pleasure; it tinctures every object with new lustre. We do not ask ourselves why we are happy, we feel that we are so, and that is sufficient. The freshness, like new flowers, gives forth a sweetness, delicate and spontaneous, and the spirit reposes under its influence in a beatitude of which, like the happiness of childhood, it is not conscious till it is past.

THE RECENTLY-CAPTURED BASKING SHARK.—An agent of the British Museum went to Shanklin the other day to claim the royalty of the capture of the basking shark, but the Coastguard, on behalf of the Board of Trade, proved a right to the disposal of the shark, which was captured on shore, and, therefore, does not come within the rule of royalties. The agent had made arrangements to purchase the monster for the National Museum, and out of the proceeds

the workmen will get their share. The specimen is to be skinned, and the skeleton will probably also be preserved. Why are not fishermen entitled to call a shark their own after catching it, as much as they are if they net a herring? The British Museum agent has purchased the skin (1½ ton in weight)!

WHOM DID SHE LOVE?

A PLEASANT, gentle-looking girl was seated under the shade of an old oak-tree. There was a wistful look in her brown eyes as she followed the form of a handsome, dashing-looking fellow, going down the path, with a brilliant little beauty hanging on his arm.

"Oh, I wish it was time to go! I just hate picnics!" she was saying to herself, when lounging, careless and free, came Tom Howard, and said:

"Everybody here has paired off but you and me, Miss Grayson. Oh, I'm not going to call you so. My sisters call you Annie, and I think I might. You are tired, I see, and the day not half spent. Come! I'm going to try and make myself agreeable, and perhaps the hours may be endured until the going home time comes. Now, Annie, I know what you were thinking about when I came up."

Annie shook her head and said:

"Indeed you do not."

"Very well, if I'm right, you will own it?"

Annie smiled in assent.

"You were hating picnics because a certain handsome fellow is devoting himself to a would-be belle!"

Annie blushed so deeply that Tom said:

"That's all right. I have a knack of reading looks. I'm glad you are not an acknowledged beauty, Annie. I detest having to talk to such girls. One has got to keep, while with them, the same look of admiration on his face, and neither see nor hear anybody else. It is really good to have a sensible girl, to talk to."

"Indeed, I'd just like to be as pretty as Miss Oakley! Just see how Harry keeps beside her."

Annie's lips quivered just a little then. Ah, she had let her secret slip out.

Tom felt as if he would enjoy giving Harry Cleveland a good thrashing. He felt sure he had been trifling with the gentle girl's heart. But Tom thought changing the conversation would help matters just then.

"Have you ever spent a winter in town, Annie?"

Annie never had; but said:

"I would like to, ever so much."

"Katie has mother's commands, to either bring you or the promise of your coming before Christmas," Tom said. "And then I'll promise you the gayest time you ever had."

On and on Tom talked, telling of the time they had last season, and relating anecdotes and jokes, so that, notwithstanding an occasional sigh, when Harry came in sight, Annie was surprised when some one called.

"The boat is coming!"

Tom managed to catch Harry alone on the way home, and say:

"Cleveland, since I've been visiting down here, I've heard your name connected with Miss Grayson's. Now, I want to know if I will be trespassing on somebody else's ground?"

"No, indeed; not mine. Annie is the dearest little friend in the world. That's all. Possibly in time, there is no knowing, but I might have been rash enough to—well—ah!—excuse me, there is Miss Oakley, beautiful and rich. Good evening. You have my best wishes."

"The consummate puppy. He is not worthy of her. Never mind. My name's not Tom Howard if I don't change his tune in less than six months."

Annie Grayson and Tom Howard's sister were schoolmates. A sweet, simple, country girl was Annie, never having been farther than the little town where the seminary was in which she had been educated.

Harry Cleveland had been visiting an uncle in the neighbourhood for a few weeks, during which time he had amused himself with the gentle little Annie.

And she, poor girl, thought her heart must break when Harry left her to follow in the train with Miss Oakley's admirers.

Annie's father was only a "well-to-do farmer," and it cost him a considerable effort to give his daughter a suitable fit-out for a winter in town; but Annie had grown so sad he was glad to let her go. Annie had not entirely cast Harry from her heart. Some little hope of seeing him and winning him back lingered still with her.

What Tom had been doing I cannot just tell, but somehow, to Annie's immense surprise, the evening of her arrival she found herself surrounded by

a half-dozen very pleasant young gentlemen, each one seeming to vie with the other in attentions to her. Engagements for the opera, concerts and lectures were made for her. In a few words, in less than a week after she reached town, Annie Grayson was an acknowledged belle. No one called her a beauty. But one raved over her "bronzé eyes," another, her charming naïveté; a third her sylph-like form. An artist friend of Tom's wanted to paint her picture. He, of course, knew true beauty. That was enough. It was the fashion to have De Vere paint one's portrait; and so, in a few weeks, Annie Grayson's picture was on exhibition in De Vere's studio.

One would hardly have credited the change those weeks had wrought in the simple country girl, and for the better too. She was not spoiled at all—only pleased and happy. She grew very easy and graceful in her manner. Her eyes were brighter, and laughing. She had gotten entirely over the wound made by Harry Cleveland, and was heart-whole and free for a while. Frequently she met Miss Oakley with Harry, but no longer she sighed for her beauty. Once or twice he had called, but finding Annie always with pleasant company, troubled himself no farther. What it was that first drew so many admirers around Annie Tom knew best; but no one wondered that she endeared herself to all who knew her.

Whispers were afloat that Miss Oakley's riches were in the oil regions, and after a while that no oil was there, consequently no riches for her. What it was I can't say; but Miss Oakley went home, and Harry did not follow. About this time Harry's aunt came to town, bringing to Annie many little remembrances from home.

Of course Harry came with her—and somehow managed to get in the way of dropping in occasionally, much to the disgust of some of Annie's more persevering suitors. Harry never could bear opposition. First, because he wanted to run others off, and, again, because Miss Grayson was the "fashion" then. Harry began again his love-making. Wooing the little rustic and wooing the calm, assured city belle were two different things.

Annie laughed at him, not believing, or feigning not to believe a word he said. At length—in perfect desperation—Harry sought Tom, and begged his help.

"Cleveland, months ago I came to you. I would not have tried to win her from you. You told me to go ahead, I had your best wishes. I cannot understand this change—"

"Nor I, Tom. I only know I love her now—I do, upon my honour," said Harry.

"Has not the little piece of fun, the report of an uncle in India, whose heiress she is to be, had this powerful effect?" Tom asked, a contemptuous smile curling his lips.

"No, no. Of course I know better than that. You remember my aunt's intimate connection with her family. No, Tom, I love her—I'd marry her to-day, and work for her cheerfully all the days of my life."

"And Miss Oakley?"

"She—ah, well! I only imagined I was in love with her," Harry said, looking considerably embarrassed.

"Well, Cleveland, I am not one of Miss Grayson's suitors. If you can win her I shall not oppose you."

One after another of Annie's lovers had to content themselves with her friendship. Harry grew very hopeful, and Tom began to think his little game might not end just as he wished. He could resign her to any one sooner than to Harry Cleveland. There was one young fellow to whom Tom had confessed his joke concerning the India wealth. When he knew Annie was poorer than himself he wooed her more earnestly. In every way he was worthy of Annie.

Possibly for a chance to learn the true state of her heart, Tom went to plead another's cause.

"Annie, may I speak a word for Noble? Can you not learn to love him? Poor fellow! he quite worships you," Tom said, and I wish—

"I wish I was home again," Annie said; and, dropping her head, she sobbed like a grieved child.

"Why, Annie, how can you talk so? What has worried you? Everybody loves you. You ought to be the happiest girl in the world," Tom said, trying to soothe her.

"I don't want everybody to love me, and everybody don't love me," sobbed Annie.

"Oh, you unreasonable little girl! Six months ago I found your heart almost breaking for the love of just one. You wanted to be beautiful for his sake. And now that all you wished for is yours you are not happy. What more can you wish?"

"I wish I'd never come to town! I wish I just knew I possessed the love of one true heart. What do I want with many?"

"Annie, I truly believe Harry loves you, if it is about him you are troubled. But I would sooner give you to Noble—"

She turned, with her eyes flashing. What she would have said was interrupted by Harry's entrance.

Tom left the room. A half-hour after, with a heavy step, the young man came forth, and, joining Tom on the porch, said:

"It is all over with me, Howard. I would give six years of my life to recall the last six months. Then I might have won her, and now she is lost to me for ever!"

"Whom does she care for, I'd like to know?" Tom asked.

Harry shook his head sadly, and passed out a wiser man. Later that afternoon Tom found out.

"I wished I had tried to win her myself," he said. "I shall never love another so well. I wonder if her heart is free? I've a mind to try."

Annie, Tom's sister, and a little brother sat out on the porch watching the sun set, when the loud report of a gun was heard in the house. The little boy rushed in, and a moment after came flying back, crying:

"Oh, Tom is shot! Tom is killed!"

All ran in—all but Annie. Without a word she had fallen to the ground. Ten minutes after, when they found her, she was to all appearance lifeless.

It was so long before she opened her eyes that they had grown terribly anxious.

With a wild look at last she turned from one to the other. Then her gaze rested on one nearest to her. With a glad cry she put forth her arms.

Tom knew all then, and kneeling beside her said, in a low whisper:

"My darling, my own, be sure of the love of one true heart. Are you satisfied with mine, love?"

"Are you hurt?" she asked, the warm blood returning to the pale face.

"Not the least, only upset by the shock. I would not have minded a considerable hurt for such a cure," Tom said.

And then, when they were alone, he asked again:

"Are you happy now, Annie?"

"Who would not be," she answered, "when sure of the love of one true heart?" F. H. B.

A CENTENARIAN.—Count Waldeck celebrated his 100th birthday on the 16th of March, and he gave a little fête to his friends on the occasion. He is engaged in preparing two pictures for the annual exhibition, and received not only the congratulations but the friendly criticisms of his guests.

THE GOVERNOR OF THE MILITARY KNIGHTS OF WINDSOR, Sir John Paul Hopkins, died recently at Windsor Castle. He was nearly ninety years of age, and was a rather noteworthy character, having fought with the British troops throughout the whole of the Peninsular war, sixty-eight years ago.

A HORSE SHOW AT THE CHAMPS ELYSEES.—A horse show will open shortly at the Exhibition building in the Champs Elysées. In addition to the ordinary attractions now features of special interest are contemplated, as three tournaments will be given by the pupils of Saumur, the École-Major, and the School of Saint-Cyr. The date fixed for this last is the 7th of April, and their fellow-students, 600 in number, will be present at the spectacle.

LADIES' BOOTS.—The Parisians say they have had enough of the high-heeled boot fashion for ladies. They assert that it flings them too much forward, hurts the spine, and reduces the size of the calf. The doctors have recommended the reverse fashion, very low heels indeed and high soles, for a time, so as to fling the body backwards from the hips upwards. This will counteract the effects of the late folly, they think. When will the ladies be permitted to be perfectly upright and straight down?

MONEY PROSPECTS.—The event of the week in the market has been the withdrawal of £148,000 from the Bank for Germany, to complete the recent order which has been on the market. It is understood that no farther withdrawals on this account are for the present impending, the German Government proposing to coin very little new gold this year; but nothing of course can be affirmed with any certainty as to when the next order will come on the market. In addition, some small amounts have been withdrawn from the Bank for Brazil and elsewhere.

CLARENCE HOUSE.—A very considerable number of high-class foreign workmen have been brought over to assist in the completion of the ornamental portions of the works now rapidly approaching completion at Clarence House, the town residence of the Duke of Edinburgh. These men consist of mould and cornice makers, workers in plaster, etc., whilst for the bijou Greek Church, situated on the west of the building, and intended for the private devotions

of her Royal Highness the Duchess of Edinburgh and suite, a number of first-class Italian workmen have been brought over to inlay the mosaics of the altar, walls, floorings, etc. In consequence of the failure of all attempts to purchase the buildings in the rear of Clarence House, a portion of St. James's Palace has been incorporated with the new premises, thus affording a considerably increased accommodation. The two gardens have been thrown into one, and laid out in uniform terraces, slopes, etc. The entire works, it is expected, will be completed by the end of the month.

MILDRED VANE; A STORY OF THE MOUNTAINS.

It was a day in mid-summer, but a day of storm and gloom and tempest. Munroe Dudgeon, who had fled for a month's respite to Switzerland in a valley between the mountains and river, the hem of the narrow skirt of which was laved by the waters, thought, as he watched the storm through a window, that he had never witnessed anything half so grand in his twenty-six years of life and five of travel as this storm in the mountains.

The rain came in a sheeted torrent, filling and darkening the atmosphere. The freed wind, loosed from the mountain heights, swept in and surged through the valley, lashing the river into waves of white, curling foam, howling, before its strong might, a long line of half-century oaks skirting the garden, like swaying willows.

The booming of continuous distant thunder came at intervals, with a prolonged roar, or broke with a sudden crash at what seemed a fearful nearness; the whole atmosphere lighting an instant with swift, sharp flashes, while in the distance chains of lightning, red-linked and vivid, hung seemingly from the scurried mountain peaks, leaping and flashing from crag to crag, a quivering, a burning sheet of flame! A giant elm, at a little distance, was struck and riven in twain by the red lightning bolt.

To one of strong nerve and love of sublimity it was a wild and splendid sight.

Suddenly there came a hoarse shout rising above the roar of the tempest, and a moment after the mail-coach came tearing down the road, the driver urging his horses to a headlong speed. The ancient coach swayed and trembled, threatening to upset. A series of small shrieks resounded from within. Another crack of the long whip, and they whirled around the corner and drew up at the door, the horses panting and covered with foam.

A rather diminutive specimen of Jehu, fortified by a complete suit of oilcloth against the raging elements, sprang nimbly down from his elevated position. The landlord, postmaster, and farmer, all in one, rushed to the door with a spread umbrella.

"Quite full inside," familiarly cried the driver, as the suggestive umbrella came to view, which was immediately brought into requisition to shelter the passengers in their exit from the coach to the house.

First came a solemn-faced, clerical-looking gentleman, with a lady of Falstaffian proportions lying in a half-faint across his arms. Then two little chattering magpies of girls, whom nothing could awe into silence. A young girl with a mass of the post's "golden curls," the kink taken out by the mischievous rain, elaborating her shoulders, her fresh face beaming with insipid gentleness, sprang out unassisted and ran up the steps with marvellous agility. A newly married country couple, dressed in their wedding array, approaching the termination of their wedding tour, came in with smiling wedding faces, looking satisfied and happy, as though the storm was a part of the wedding entertainment got up expressly as a culmination of wedding bliss, though it was very evident that no addition, atmospheric or otherwise, was needful to fill up the glad, overrunning measure of their ecstatic happiness.

Lastly came a light, springy step, a figure full and perfect in its outlines of elegance, looking perhaps in willowy flexibility, yet betraying in its free, self-poised movements the volume of real, earnest life which impelled it.

The head and face did not disappoint you, they were in exquisite keeping with the figure. Set with a dainty grace on the white-throated neck and oblique shoulders, the head bore itself with an air of stateliness pardonable in its unconscious, noble grace. Her face was all light and shade, fair and white, with a flickering colour on her cheek, which paled and deepened like the varying sunset bloom.

A purpose there seemed in her life and a purity of knowledge which is power shone luminous in and gave character to her face. Her eyes—herein lay her singular fascination—were bluish-gray—dark, changing, clear one moment, mystical the next, evolving a thousand evanescent thoughts and transient emotions lying on its surface, but their luminous

key, which looked up the inner depths deftly fathomed and made themselves master of yours with a rare, marvellous power you did not care to dispel.

A clerical gentleman, who had deposited his wife on the sofa, where she was rapidly recovering under the kindly sympathies and efficient care of the landlady, met her at the door.

"My dear child," he commenced, in a self-reproachful voice, but his clear, calm look, which met his, checked it, and he concluded, with a touch of surprise in her tone, "and you were not frightened at this terrible mountain tempest?"

"Not in the least, my dear sir. Though a novelty to me, it is one of exceeding grandeur. How is Mrs. Renshawe?"

"Fast recovering; I have given orders for rooms to be prepared for us. In the meantime we must be content to avail ourselves of this."

He pointed to the other end of the room, where his wife was reclining.

"Oh, Mildred, isn't this terrible?" exclaimed Mrs. Renshawe, as she approached. "Do help me to persuade my husband to leave this, and return as soon as I am able. A fortnight of such weather as this would completely unnerve me."

"But this is not an everyday affair, and may not occur again during the season," and Mildred, passing her arm around her, smoothed her hair and feverish temples with a cool hand and soft, mesmeric movement.

A crashing peal of thunder, followed by a quick, sharp flash, brought her hands to her eyes.

"Oh, Milly, if we were only safe back home once more!" and the lady shuddered with a fear she could not overcome.

"This depression of spirits is partly attributable to your recent illness and the fatigues of your journey; after recovering from that I shall expect you to enjoy these brief summer days so keenly that perhaps we shall be obliged to return to England without you. This bracing mountain air will make a new creature of you."

Under the influence of the soothing voice and words she fell into a light slumber.

The storm rolled sullenly away to the north; the hoarse wind lulled to a low, softened measure; delicious languor drifted in on the breeze, rising fresh and sweet and fragrant from the wet grass, and through the full-folaged trees and dowy shrubs of rose and lilac.

A bright rainbow arched the sky, and the glad sun created a glory uncrowned by art—divine, because baptized and illumined by the Hand Infinite.

The diligence, with a fresh relay of horses, took away all it brought save the Rev. Mr. Renshawe and lady and Mildred Vane.

If Munroe Dudgeon found this a charming place to linger in, and, lingering, overran his month's limit, what wonder is it that when it received the additional attraction of a lady whom the previous winter had kindly given him three evenings' acquaintance with he resolved on another fortnight's vacation?

Mountain paths, winding fearfully close to the edges of steep precipices, lovely and fir shaded, under jutting cliffs that made ledges for the trailing vines and flowering mosses, could only be accessible to her through the careful help and wariness of an experienced guide. Such Mildred Vane found in Mr. Dudgeon.

The reverend Renshawe had no fancy for the break-neck expeditions this daring girl delighted in; so her sketch-book of charming views, from miniature Swiss Alpine heights, was under almost daily obligations to the indefatigable Dudgeon. There was a fine little craft of a boat that clef the waves like a bird, and in which Mildred learned to row with dextrous skill. When she could not coax the timorous Mrs. Renshawe, who had grown happy and content under the placid shadows of the garden trees, to make one with them, she and her teacher in boating whiled away delicious sunsets, coquetting in the water till the last line of crimson dipped and quenched its radiance in the waves.

Perhaps Munroe Dudgeon was presumptuous—perhaps not; but it was no easy affair to loiter away a fortnight of sunny idleness with a girl like Mildred, and that too in Nature's free abandon, beyond the irksome restraints and conventional barriers that society imposes on us, and come out unscathed, heart-whole, without the shadow of a lingering sigh for the lost sweetness; and it was no wonder that when the last sunset was fading out of the valley he drew the oars with gentle force from her hands and grew suddenly grave and serious.

He told the story of his love with straightforward manliness and with an ardent and fervid glow of passion that ought to have satisfied any woman.

Her head was partly turned from him as he spoke, but he could see the swift tide of crimson surging up over the snowy line of neck, widening as it grew, and culminating only in her forehead. Then it faded

out, and, like the hand lying passively in his, her face was cold, still and colourless.

It was some minutes before she spoke; then she began, but in a voice so altered, so icy in its chilling reserve, that a wide, bridgeless gulf seemed to open between them.

"One word, Mr. Dudgeon—and pray be frank with me. Have I once, within the fortnight of our acquaintance, by implied word, look, or action invited this?"

Something beside love swelled his heart now, and he answered:

"The subject, Miss Vane, is evidently a malapropos one; let us relinquish it."

"Not till you have answered my question, if you please."

This time the tone softened, and her hand, which she had withdrawn from his, was laid with a gentle, persuasive touch on his arm.

It subdued him in a moment.

"Your conduct toward me," said he, "has been characterized by the strictest delicacy and propriety; yet I confess I did not suppose your heart invulnerable or myself an object of unconquerable dislike." "You are not," she replied, and there was more than softness in her voice. "But, as I have said, the subject should be an interdicted one between us."

Not another word was said.

He rowed the boat in silence to its moorings, secured it, and she stepped unaided on the shore.

While they were climbing up the steep, shelving bank her foot slipped on the loose, rolling stones, and he reached out his hand to assist her as he had been wont. She put it by quietly, silently; but he felt that there was no anger or unfriendliness in her refusal of his support, and the momentary bitterness he had felt rising against her was disarmed by the look of grave beseeching with which she put back his extended hand.

Arrived at the house she went directly to her room, and he saw no more of her that night. The next morning he rose at early daybreak, and sunrise found him in the thick dew and freshness of the mountains. He had informed the landlord the evening before that he should not be in to breakfast the ensuing morning, as he designed taking an early walk which would occupy some hours. His secret thought was:

"The coach which is to take away the Leith party will go out at eight; I will be back at half past that hour."

He had no wish now to look upon her face again. Since she was denied to him, the sight of her would only make the denial harder to bear. It was his duty now, he wisely counselled himself, to forget that such a woman ever existed; or, at best, to remember the last fortnight's happy intercourse only as a happy dream that was to realize no fruition. Yet all the while he was digesting this bitter philosophy he was unconsciously breaking sprays of the flowers she liked best and blending them harmoniously.

So the romance of his life was over. He felt this with a dreary void, and fell to wondering why, of all the women the world had offered him—women in rer, lovelier than this one—out of all the rest he had chosen this one, and would be satisfied with no other. Yet, through all, his heart never held a moment possibility of coquetry in Mildred Vane's conduct towards him. He only felt that he had loved and lost, and there was now nothing left for him but to forget.

Resting on a projecting crag, the minutes slipped by, and thought—that one's will cannot always control—was busy with her. It pictured her loitering in her last morning's walk under the garden trees, turning with a half-regretful sigh, a wistful look, on the river and familiar haunts in the mountain past. Then, with a gathered rose, or one of the many fossils they had gleaned together, as a souvenir of pleasant days all too brief, she was going. The hand-shakes and the look at kindly faces from the cottage inn, a glance that took in all the summer glory of the day and place, and she was gone.

Thought stopped here; powerless now, it could go no farther. A new emotion quickened his face—an eager desire, an irrepressible longing to see her once more—to look on her, though himself unseen, was moving him.

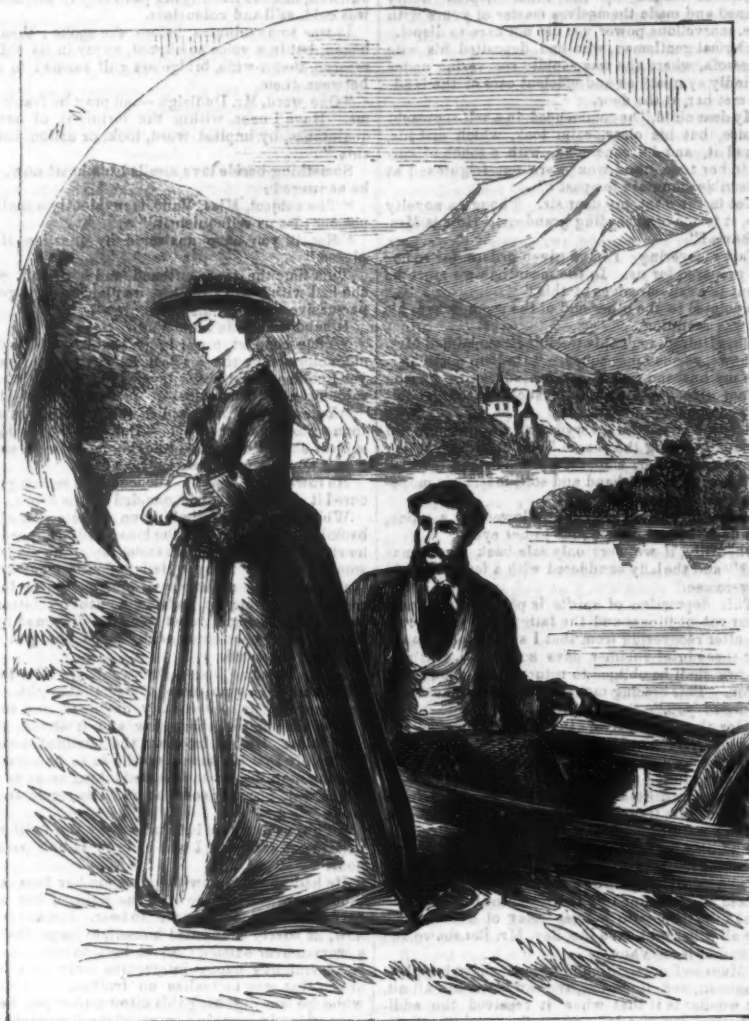
He rose and paced up and down under the broad, sheltering pines.

The desire grew upon him, an ardent thirst that would not be controlled. He looked at his watch.

"There is yet time," he said, aloud, and with the firmness of one that has settled with himself some vexed point.

Faster than he went up he hurried down the steep mountain side; he entered the dining-hall just as the breakfast-bell was ringing, and had only time to lay the wild flowers he had picked by Mildred's plate when she came in.

She saw them instantly as she sat down and bowed her thanks across the table.



[THE ROMANCE OVER.]

He scanned her face eagerly. How proud she looked—how quiet and self-sustained!

He knew it was not like her to betray agitation, if she felt it, which was doubtful. But she could not hide from the swift look that sought hers the momentary quivering of her drooped eyelids, the faint, flickering colour that rose to an ardent flush and then faded out as suddenly, while she bent for a moment over the flowers.

The table-talk this morning was dull and commonplace. Nothing was hazarded that could provoke a discussion, and the fragmentary talk that served did not get beyond a certain limit. The animated group who had discussed breakfast and social topics together with equal zest and freedom for a fortnight was very unlike the quiet circle that gathered around the table this morning for the last time.

Mr. Renshawe rose first and went to the window.

"There is promise of a fine day, ladies," he said. "The diligence will be here in half an hour."

"In half an hour, and we have not packed yet!" cried Mrs. Renshawe, and, fluttering up, she hurried off to superintend the packing of her treasures. Her husband laughed at her eagerness.

When going out from the places we have made home, though ever so brief and transient, yet home, where we have lingered over days of golden glory and felt the large freedom of soul which comes through the wonderful evanescence and strong, glad life of nature, we feel a momentary pang and then a feeling of mingled pain and pleasure, as the familiar places and objects which have ministered to our joy reflect our wistful, waning glance for the last time.

Mildred felt this, and more perhaps, for tears rose to the eyes wandering over the valley landscape with boundaries of serried hills. Other memories, mingling sweet and bitter, might have brought the half-checked sob to her lips as she stood alone at the foot of the garden steps, and felt, thrilling her

through and through, the subtle sweetness of the roses, opening bright and red in the tangles of thick bloom.

She turned from the roses and met Munroe Dudleigh face to face.

"Is it time, then?" she asked, her voice failing her a little, and she hurried by him.

He followed quickly, and they came up the path together. No word of farewell was spoken, and the subject that lay nearest his heart was not touched upon in this last out of many walks they had enjoyed together. She went in, then came out ready for the coach, which stood with pawing, impatient horses at the door.

"Don't forget your friends when you come to England, Mr. Dudleigh," said Mr. Renshawe, shaking him warmly by the hand, which friendly courtesy was warmly seconded by his wife.

Mildred's foot was on the step of the coach, when she paused with sudden hesitation and, turning half round, held out her hand to Mr. Dudleigh. He took it in both of his and spoke a few words, inaudible to the rest. Her only reply was a negative smile and the trite, simple word "Good-bye," that he felt with a bitterness time could never annul for him. Then he handed her into the coach and the driver closed the door.

A pang, swift and sharp as a sword-thrust, pierced him with the closing door. The coffin-lid, shut over the face of one inexpressibly dear, and for whom he felt the sorest need, could scarcely be more painful than that, he thought, as he stood alone where, but an instant before, Mildred had blessed him with her hand and smile. The next day he was en route for fresh scenes.

In a lady's boudoir, dainty, elegant, and wearing the vesture and perfume of June, in the purple bloom of trailing flowers and the softened glow of rose-coloured hangings we find the Mildred of a year ago.

Near her stood a man—tall, dark, and austere—her husband, the man she had been promised to by her dying father, when she, too young for realization, was a mere child of fifteen.

"Be composed, dearest," he was saying, in a soft voice; "you are viewing the case from a false standpoint. Let me think for you. This woman whom you propose to introduce into the immediate bosom of your family can hold no claim upon you, either through law or nature. The mere accident of her wearing your family name, through marriage to your father, grants her no privileges from you. If you would put by the high-wrought fantasies you are willing to term duty, and let your quick mind and clear judgment act dispassionately, you would be convinced of the utter fallacy of your arguments, and the propriety and wisdom of the position I have chosen—a position that justice to myself and to you will oblige me to maintain at every hazard!"

At the last his voice rose from its habitual smooth persuasiveness, assuming the full power and prerogative of authority.

Mildred's look never wavered; her eyes showed only rising contempt for the man seeking to blind her judgment and stifle her affections by his narrow sophistries.

"If not in love to one who, in the highest sense, has supplied to me a mother's place, through the years of my greatest need, justice to my father's memory would not let me appropriate luxuries that the woman he loved and shielded with solicitous tenderness must be denied from sharing. But is it only claims that have a legal substantiation that you are willing to recognize and feel bound to satisfy? Are there no higher claims and duties than those the law makes binding upon us? Are gratitude, faithfulness, and love words that have no wider significance for you than the narrow limit of self-interest or legal necessity would prescribe?"

"There is one important point, my love," he said, with a lazy smile, and, seemingly, nowise disconcerted by the sting of sarcasm in her voice, which had touched him, nevertheless, "which, strangely enough, you have entirely overlooked, and by virtue of which all your nice little arrangements and pleasing fancies must become utterly impracticable."

She did not reply or question, but turned to him a quick look.

"My wife's interests," he said, answering her look, "must be mine. If I see her wilfully neglecting or injuring them, my affection for her, and the right of protection she has given me, constrain me to interfere and shield them and her, in opposition to her own will. When you gave yourself to me, dearest," he went on, his hand descending to her shoulder with a fond, caressing movement, much as we would essay to soothe into submission a refractory horse, over whose unwilling neck we were waiting to slip the bridle, "you resigned to my trust, without limit or reservation, your right in your late father's estate, to be appropriated as my judgment should dictate. The estate—perhaps before I have not thought to mention it—I have disposed of; the proceeds I have invested to advantage in my name."

He looked at her as he pronounced the last words, with slow deliberation, to note the effect. Shrinking away from the hand on her shoulder, she withdrew from his reach, and heard him through, without sign or motion.

"I at least believed you honourable," she said; with mingled scorn and pain in her lowered voice. Then, with the rising sense of dependence—a humiliating dependence on this man, whom she could only despise—came a rising tide of anger, with a flash of fierceness in it against the man who had miserably robbed her, and taken away her right and power to make a home for her mother, whom an unjust lawsuit had left without home or shelter in her helpless age. "But this property, which is mine, and which I trusted to you, I now wish to retain in my own possession," she said, after a silence.

"Not till the balance of your mind is restored, my Mildred," he replied, with gentle authority, "and you are entirely recovered from this excitable malady, this terrible monomania. Change of scene and air, which I am resolved you shall have, may bring the soothing effect I fondly anticipate."

He approached her as he spoke and attempted to take her hand. She drew it back and looked it with the other behind her.

"My father trusted you," she said, with gathering passion and in a tone of bitter scorn; "and I have proved your treachery. You are false, faithless, and a robber."

His face grew ashen white, even to his lips, and the deadly glitter in his eyes was not good to look at. But he mastered it with a powerful effort, and said, in a reproachful tone, as he turned from the room:

"When you have seen this in its true light, my

dear, your gratitude will be in proportion to the bitterness you now feel against one who would sacrifice even himself to your happiness."

That evening Mildred went to her mother. She felt that her dead father, could he know all, would sanction the step she was taking. She had faithfully fulfilled his last injunction, though it involved the sacrifice of her own happiness. She had striven to love and honour the man they had given her to, assuming all a Christian wife's duties. Failing in this, through his utter unworthiness to command even respect and esteem, she still held sacred all her wifely duties, but in assuming them she bowed to the burden of a heavy cross, whose thorns pierced her daily. Yet she suffered no abatement of their strictest fulfilment and yielded to her nominal husband all that her conscience could sanction.

But, when his encroaching imperiousness assumed the right to exclude from her love and care the woman whose declining years yearned for the tenderness and gentle care she had bestowed without limit or measure to make sweet and pleasant Mildred's youth, he transcended his wide limit and brought into action a strong, resistless will, underlying all her passive yielding to his commands, that he never supposed her possessed of.

To one of her strict principles and hereditary pride there was a painful shrinking in this separating herself from her husband. Still, there was nothing she could desire reversed.

When she had taken lodgings for herself and mother where their remote solitude was not likely to be discovered and broken in upon by the man who held a legal claim upon her and who, she could not doubt, would take every possible means to search her out and, separating her from her mother, constrain her to return to her allegiance to him, she felt a grateful sense of freedom, that grew upon her with each succeeding day, as it slipped quietly on to its close and did not bring the presence they most dreaded to see.

All Mildred's life she had ease and luxury poured into her lap, with a prodigal's freeness, every good and attainable gift that could make life desirable; yet, now her own hands supplied their daily needs she had no lingering regrets for the departed glory of her past life.

To women of Mildred's mental calibre there is something unsatisfactory in a life of mere indolent pleasure and self-indulgence. There is an indefinite longing, coupled with a yearning desire—vague, it may be—an eager reaching out for something that shall develop and bring into play a strong, vital life—a deep undercurrent of earnest spirit and power, that can learn adaptation and endurance to almost any limit. She was necessary to her mother's happiness, ay, even her very existence; and, though hand and head found little leisure, she was content. This life, she felt daily, was more in accordance with the supreme command—though falling sadly short—than the life she had been leading.

Sometimes, when heart and brain are weary, she sits, with folded hands, and lets the sweet, subtle memories of "a fortnight in the mountains" drift roily over her senses. But, whether dreaming idly, in the pale gold of twilight, of the low, vine-tapestried piazzas, or of strolling the garden paths, through rare perfumed atmosphere, floating up from waves of bloom, rippling through seas of roses; or, high up, under steep cliffs, in the mountain pass, where royal nature asserts herself in the full abandon of grand luxuriance—in the broad, feathery bough of pines' changeless green, sighing out a rhythmic who of the sea, with soft clashing shiver; gray, drooping mosses, hanging in sheets from giant oaks, interweaving itself with tangled vines and virginal clematis, looping in quaint arabesques from rock to tree; or, clearing with swift boat's keel the river's silver foam—around them a brooding perfume of drifting lilies, above them the amber transparency of gold-veined clouds, sending up shafts of vivid flame and waxing slowly away to a softened purple glow, settling down on the sharp mountain heights and clinging there with a soft, relieving touch, like the silken folds of a violet-fringed mantle, fallen with careless grace from fairest lady's shoulders of snow; the still, slumbrous hush of the tideless water, broken only by the soft splash of oars, and at intervals a low murmur of voices; now and then the rhythmical flow of fragmentary verse and the deep, ringing voice that lingered on the cadences, subduing itself to that passionate softness and sweetness that thrills and vibrates to the heart—whether dreaming idly of all this past happiness, or busily engaged at her work, she was content and almost happy, her conscience absolving her from sin in the rare recurrence of these memories.

Four years have gone by—years of quiet peace and blessing to mother and daughter, until one night Mrs. Vane, who had been gradually and painlessly passing away, closed her eyes with a tender smile at Mildred's troubled face, her hand in Mildred's

soft clasp, and awoke in eternity. Her last words were a blessing for her child's unwearied care and tender love.

Mildred's grief, though great, could not be bitter. The close had come to days lengthened out to a calm, peaceful old age. But with her mother's life ended all peaceful harmony for her.

She had left her husband, not from dislike, though in her heart she could only despise him; not from desire of personal gratification, but because life apart from him could be the only life that could bring happiness to her mother, who had higher and stronger claims upon her.

That claim was satisfied, and now she must take up the burden of her life again. She must return to him.

Thus it followed that, one morning, a week after her mother's burial, she stood before the door she had left four years before.

Mildred was a proud woman, and it was galling to her pride to return voluntarily to the husband and home she had left without that husband's consent, and say to him:

"I am come back to assume marital relations, if it is your pleasure to have me."

But a governing principle, rising superior to and holding in abeyance all baseful pride, was impelling her.

"Is Mr. Graham in?" she asked of the French servant, who came in answer to her summons.

He looked at her with a queer, puzzled smile.

She repeated her question.

"Is it the master you are waiting to see?"

"Yes—Mr. Graham."

The man, who had been recently installed in his present vocation, stood a moment in evident doubt and perplexity; then, saying he would "speak to the master," he opened the door into a private reception room.

She had not long to wait; a few moments, and she heard steps in the passage. She shuddered as they came nearer—the slow, measured steps of a man. She felt her heart chilling within her, and bowed her face on her hands, as if to shut out from sight the approaching presence.

When she looked up her eyes fell upon the mild, benign countenance of an elderly man, sitting opposite her.

She looked from him to the door, and around the room, as if looking for some face that was not there.

"You wished to see me, madam?" said the elderly gentleman, in a voice that was a fitting match for his face.

"Pardon me—no, sir. It was to Mr. Graham that I directed the servant to take my name."

"There is evidently some mistake. My servant is new, and probably did not remember that my name is not Graham. That gentleman is not a resident here."

"Can you furnish me any clue to his place of residence?"

"No. I purchased this house and grounds of Mr. Sullivan."

"Thank you. I am sorry to have interrupted you needlessly. I have not been here for four years, and supposed Mr. Graham to be living here, as formerly."

"The interruption has occasioned me no annoyance. I should be gratified to give you some information that would aid your search."

She felt a sense of relief when she crossed the threshold of the house where the one miserable year of her life had been spent, and found herself in the street again.

Mr. Sullivan was an old friend of her father. She remembered his daughter as the earliest playmate of her earliest youth.

She felt a deep humiliation to extend her inquiries there, and so discover to them the divided life she and her husband had led. But it was a humiliation she did not seek to spare herself.

Mr. Sullivan was rejoiced to find again the daughter of his old friend, and his family received her with such sincere warmth and gladness that Mildred felt the tears rising to her eyes.

She had a long conversation with Mr. Sullivan, wherein, constrained by the kindly interest he evinced for her and sacred trust of friendship her father had reposed in him, she kept back none of the unhappy differences that had existed between herself and husband and that had ultimately robbed her of her fortune and left her but one alternative—to leave him or forsake her mother in her friendless old age.

Though a man of few words, Mildred felt she had his warmest sympathy and approval in the course she had pursued. Then he told her how Mr. Graham when he closed the sale of his property to him, intimated that Mildred was travelling on the Continent with friends, where he designed joining her as soon

as business would permit. Soon after, he learned Mr. Graham had left London. This was the year following Mildred's separation from him. For the present search for him was unavailing.

Mr. Sullivan and his family, with a few chosen friends, were preparing for a year's foreign travel and urged Mildred to make one of their party. Having now no strong ties to prevent her joining in the pleasure that such a tour promised, she readily consented.

It was a storm at sea—a terrible storm and every day had brought news of ships wrecked or driven ashore by the violence of the tempest.

It was nearing nightfall, and the fierce gale was rushing and walling with gathering intensity. Groups of eager, excited men were hurrying to the sea-shore. A new comer in town noted the simultaneous movement, and asked a man, who stood looking, with anxious face, after the crowd, "what it meant."

"A vessel driving in to the shore from stress of weather."

He waited to hear no more, but joined the crowd hurrying seaward. This man was Monroe Dudley. As they neared the sea, through a sudden curve of the street, they could hear the tremendous roar of the breakers dashing in upon the beach, and soon they came in sight of it all.

The shore was crowded with a multitude shouting to make themselves heard above the yelling of the gale; and the thundering crash of waves. The sea, troubled, seemingly, to its very depths, rising mountain high, and hurrying to the shore with a mad sweep, hurried their shining walls of silver foam, breaking in fragments of silver spray, tumbling and leaping on the strand. The doomed ship was plunging wildly in the surging swell.

Life-boats had been got out, manned by sturdy sailors, who knew every rock and quicksand on the coast for miles. But the boats could not live in such a sea; one had gone under, and the other was tossing and struggling gallantly with the waves.

Now the ship was down in the trough of the sea—a huge wave combed over her—a cry of horror and despair from ship and shore—and she struck! A moment more, and only the white foam of the seething spray was rising where she struck, and sharp cries of lamentation and distress mingled with the hoarse roar of the surge.

"There was a whole family from this town aboard of her," remarked a man standing by Mr. Dudley.

"Who?" asked several voices at once.

"Sullivan—James Sullivan, the banker, his wife,

and daughter, and Mrs. Graham."

"Mrs. Graham?"

"Yes—Leonard Graham's wife. You remember her, don't you? She that was Mildred Vane," said the first speaker.

Dudley turned round upon the speaker with sudden fierceness.

"What's that you were saying?" he cried, close to his ear, clatching his arm with a grasp so tight that it hurt him.

"That the Sullivan family were on board the wrecked vessel!" shouted the man, thinking he had not understood him on account of the stunning thunder of the sea.

"And who else? You mentioned another name beside that!"

"Leonard Graham's wife."

"And she—"

"Was Mildred Vane."

"When was she married?"

"Six years ago."

"Should you know her if you were to see her now?" asked Dudley, excitedly.

"Know her, man! Why, I've seen her a thousand times."

Dudley drew a photograph from his pocket-book, and held it close to the man's face.

"Ah, that's her to the life—as splendid-looking a woman as there was in this town, or any other. But she's dead now."

By degrees the crowd departed, and the beach was left solitary.

The tempest was abating—only the hungry, restless tide, beating its silver foam against the rocks, and the ceaseless moan of the sea, after the mad turbulence of a week, was heard.

But one—a man—paced the wet sands all the long night, hoping against hope that, through the miraculous interposition of Providence, he might be the saviour of a precious life the pitiless sea had engulfed—if, out of his full vitality, he could supply the measure of life wanting to the chilling heart and purpling lips he remembered so rose-red and fragrant; the sealed eyes, whose once glowing light had awoke a passion in his heart he never could forget! And all this radiant loveliness the stormy sea had garnered in its depths!

Those who have loved and lost will understand the agony, thrice multiplied, of Munroe Dudleigh, who, until morning broke over the appeased waves, joined his moan with the sea's wailing dirge. To those who have not the bitter knowledge it will come full soon; let them not anticipate.

There was one more whose heart beat quickly at the wreck of the vessel by which Mrs. Graham was lost. It was her husband. He had been a week in the town, waiting the arrival of the ship "Ariel," to meet and claim his wife. As his love was through pride and glory, in owning a wife of no ordinary mind and person, so his grief spent itself in four months, when he repeated the marriage vows—this time to a fair young girl, ten years his junior, whose principal characteristic was insipid gentleness and sweet placidity of temper, that knew no law rising superior to her liege lord's.

While standing there, living over again that terrible night of storm and wreck, he saw a vessel in the distance, with fair wind and spreading sails, putting in for the harbour. He hurried away so as not to see the ship's keel floating over the waves where Mildred lay buried.

A month afterward he was among the Swiss mountains. A morning of balm for the weary-hearted man, who was up at daybreak, strolling aimlessly off through woods and lanes; and an hour after sunrise found himself in a green wooded glen, narrowly bordering a village in miniature. There was a foot-path leading from this to the road, that was faintly visible amid the trees.

He had scarcely made this discovery when he heard a light laugh, and immediately following it the gay hum of voices. Supposing it came from the road, and desiring to avoid every one, he turned in the opposite direction.

He had gone but a few yards when some one, seemingly in advance of others, came suddenly out from the dense shade of trees into the path, directly before him.

"Mr. Dudleigh! What a surprise!" exclaimed a familiar voice.

"And for me too, Mr. Renshawe," he replied, taking the extended hand.

Then followed Mrs. Renshawe, who exhibited no change in her personal appearance. She too was surprised and delighted to meet Mr. Dudleigh in the mountains again.

There was still a lingering step behind the trees that came softly nearer. The branches were put softly by.

"Ah, there you are," said a voice that made Dudleigh turn with a face that was like death one moment, to be burning crimson the next.

It was Mildred, though Dudleigh had not faith to believe till he held her hands in a close clasp. Afterward at the village inn she explained the seeming mystery.

The Sullivan party had engaged passage in the "Ariel," and written accordingly to their friends. But the day that the "Ariel" sailed Mrs. Sullivan was seized with a sudden illness that detained them several weeks.

"And Mr. Graham," said Dudleigh, speaking the name with evident reluctance. "Have you seen him since your arrival?"

"No. His marriage with Miss Armstrong was celebrated the day the 'Golden Gate,' the vessel we took passage in, entered the harbour."

"Yes, I heard of his marriage. I was in the town at the time. The 'Golden Gate,' I saw when she was making for the harbour. And you were in her?" He paused to think what he scarcely dared to say. "So you are free from Mr. Graham?"

"Yes, by a process of law that I availed myself of as soon as I learned of his marriage."

Then followed a silence that neither cared to break. Mildred was looking back upon the six years of change since she had known him. With him the time and space of six years were annihilated. He was in the mountains; Mildred Vane was near him—no charm faded from her face and form—so dear to his eyes and heart.

"Shall the subject be an interdicted one between us now, Mildred?" he said, following up his thoughts.

"The question is an open one," Mildred replied, reddening under his earnest gaze.

"You knew the desire of my heart toward you six years ago; six years have multiplied and strengthened it tenfold! And you—what can you give to me, Mildred?"

The last words were uttered with a tender pleading and his hand dropped gently to her arm. She bent her face toward him, flushed and burning, till the soft waves of her hair touched his face, and all the impassioned fondness of her heart overflowed in words of love.

F. U. R.

A MAGNIFICENT INCOME.—Formerly the most important creditor of France was Sir Richard Wallace,

who possessed an annual revenue of 1,100,000*fr.* This sum, however, appears insignificant by the side of that drawn annually by Madame Furiado, who possesses an income of 4,000,000*fr.*, representing a capital of 80,000,000*fr.* Like the nephew of Lord Seymour, this immensely wealthy lady is very benevolent, and employs a large part of her riches in alleviating distress and organizing charitable missions.

FACETIE.

NEVER set yourself up for a musician just because you have a drum in the ear; nor believe you are cut out for a school teacher merely because you have a pupil in your eye.

It is a vain thing for you to stick your finger in the water, and pulling it out look for a hole; it is equally vain to suppose that, however large a space you occupy the world will miss you when you die.

"IGNORANCE AND BLISS," ETC.

"What is it, John?"

"Why, as far as I can make out, it's one o' these 'ere, School Boards' as a' been set up all over the country, and there's been so much about in the newspapers, you know."

"Ah!"—Punch.

HAMPSTEAD HILL.—Sir Rowland Hill has published a "personal statement," complaining that the proposed fever hospital at Hampstead will block up his back windows. This is hard on the inventor of penny postage. Surely a more deserving object of punishment can be found. Where does the inventor of the halfpenny post card reside?—Punch.

A HONESTY.—A himelch Jarvis has a huge monstache, which comes down long and heavy on each side of his mouth, and he is not a little proud of it. He was greatly shocked at a camp-meeting not long since by observing a near-sighted old lady give her daughter a nudge with her elbow and inquire: "Mirandy, who is that 'ere feller with the horsehoes on his face?"

A GLITCHES.

Hairdresser: "Air's very dry, sir!"
Customer (who knows what's coming): "I like it dry."

Hairdresser (after awhile, again advancing to the attack): "Ead's very scurry, sir!"

Customer (still cautiously retreating): "Ye-as, I prefer it scurry!"

Assailant gives in defeated.

CHANGING THE STREET.—A well-known member of the Established Kirk in a small village lately put a shilling in the plate, and coolly helped himself to elevenpence halfpenny, remarking to the attendant elder: "I forgot to get change the street, Maister Broon; see I'll just put in a shillin' an' tak' out the elevenpence ha-penny. Ye'll be geyen glad to get rid of the coppers, nae doot."

BRINGING MATTERS TO A CRISIS.—A Highland youth and pretty girl sat facing each other at a party. The youth, smitten with the charms of the maiden, only ventured a shy look, and now and then touched Patty's feet under the table. The girl, determined to make the youth express what he so warmly felt, bore with these advances a little while in silence, when she cried out: "Look here! if you love me, say so, but don't dirty my stockings."

THISTLE DO.—A Scotch daily advertises for an editor who can furnish it with "pointed articles." Surely this is a waste of three and sixpence, in a land where thistles may be gathered gratis, and would be peculiarly palatable to the class of beings who appreciate Scotch journalism. A violin of native manufacture will be presented to the first canny one who discovers the joke concealed in this paragraph. No answers can be received after the 1st of April, 1880.

TRYING A CURE.—A promising youth who had heard that the biceps could be cured by administering a sudden shock of fright to the patient tried it on his father, who had an attack while tipped back in a chair. The old gentleman went over backwards, and kicked up quite a racket, especially when he regained his feet. Some say sleeps on his side now, and says that the old man can hiccup his old head off before he will ever try to cure him.

A LONG HORSE WANTED.—Scottish provincialisms often seem very laughable. We quite understand a parson when he says he will walk or ride "the length" of such and such a place, but the phrase might sometimes appear not a little ludicrous. A man went into a lively stable somewhere in the West of Scotland, and said: "Can you gie's a horse the length o' Paisley?" "Weel," was the reply, "we'll let ye see the longest we have; but I dinna think there's ony o' them that length."

CAPITAL SINK.—Athena Houseage commences one of his letters headed "Life in Paris," with a witticism. "A chateleine," says he, "of the Middle Ages, who was giving edifying lessons in the catechism to her page, suddenly asked him one day,

"How many capital sins have we?" "Four," answered the page, unhesitatingly. The lady gave the boy a box on the ear, saying, "Learn, sir, that there are none too many for me. In these carnival times I think there is an eighth capital sin which includes all the others—at least in Paris—and that is woman, though some flatterers has already said that 'woman is the fourth theological virtue.'"

(What our quondam Wooden Walls have come to!)

In Lloyd's list of wrecks and casualties, Feb. 22nd, we read that, on the "Luxor," steamship for Alexandria, coming into collision with the "Cyprus" off the Bell Buoy, the former received considerable damage, "two plates being broken."

To what a pitch have we now brought the niceties of navigation, when a ship is considered to have suffered severely on a voyage by the loss of a little crockery!—Punch.

UNSUCCESSFUL INDUSTRY.

Among the stories of human ingenuity and failure, the following deserves a foremost place: Since yere's been trovato. A poor inhabitant of Paris was reduced to the lowest ebb of fortune. His wife looked to him for support, but he had nothing either for her or for himself. But at last a bright idea struck him. There is a proverb which says that drowning men will catch at a straw; here, however, we have a man in a desperate situation catching at a drowning idea.

"Wife," said he, "you must jump off such and such a bridge into the Seine this evening."

"H'm," said the wife, "I don't know about that."

"But I say you must, or we shall starve," insisted the husband. "If you jump into the water I will pull you out, and get fifteen francs for the rescue."

"That alters the case," said the woman.

In the evening, accordingly, with a splash, she tumbled into the Seine, and a second afterwards her husband plunged in after her. Before he had gone two yards, however, a third splash was heard in the water. A man on the bridge, seeing two persons in the river, had jumped in to their assistance. First he pulled out the man, and then, going off to where the woman was about to sink exhausted, he saved her also. But the worst of all was that he received thirty francs for having saved two people.

PROVERBS REPEATED.

It has been said of old that "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." Try it. Take a bird (any bird will do) in your hand, and hold it securely; then take a passage in the first vessel you can find (any vessel will do), and proceed to the Antipodes, still retaining the bird in the hand, where the bush is supposed to be. When you arrive, examine the bird which you have in your hand, and compare it with any two birds you can find in the bush. Estimate their relative value. You will find that the proverb has led you astray.

Again. It has been said that "It is the last straw that breaks the camel's back." Inprimis, how long would a man go about until he had satisfied himself that he had found the "last" straw? But we will grant, for the sake of argument, that the "last straw" has been found. Now take your camel (any camel will do), and cautiously deposit that straw upon the back of the camel, and carefully observe whether the spine of that quadruped is dislocated. It is to be imagined not. How then about this proverb?

Once more. It has been spoken, and written, that if you "Take care of the pence, the pounds will take care of themselves." Make the experiment. Take pence (say three pence) and place them in your purse, and put your purse in your pocket. Batton your pocket, if your pocket is buttonable; or deposit the threepence with your banker, or invest them in a Canadian oil-well. Next take a sovereign (anybody's sovereign will do), and place it carefully on the pavement (the centre of a coal-plate is not a bad spot), and after retiring up the stage, and "dissembling," observe how that sovereign takes care of itself.

It is not impossible that attention may be directed to the fallacy of other proverbs in due course.

PUNCTUALITY THE THING OR TRIFLE.—The *Morcombe Chronicle*, in a short but not uneventful history of a trip to Bradford, commends the punctuality of the train, which arrived at Morcombe, on its return journey, "at least half an hour before its appointed time." It was probably well that the other trains were not "punctual" after the manner in which we understand the word's use, or our friend the "local" might not have felt so satisfied, and might then have used a term more befitting the unseemly haste of the driver. But we had forgotten to remark that we don't believe a word of the statement, which makes all the difference. It wouldn't be right, you know, when we can't get our trains up to time even, to allow a common country railway

to go half an hour in front of it. We may not be very bright, but we do know that.—*Fun.*

MYSTICISM.

A City of London merchant having a farm of pleasure about thirty miles off by rail, on taking to the farm was much puzzled to know why his fowls never laid. So he purchased in Leadenhall Market two dozen of eggs and took them down to his "little place in Surrey." At night he slipped half a dozen of these eggs into the nests.

"Well, gardener," he said next morning, "none of these fowls laid yet?"

"No, sir," said the gardener, shaking his head sadly, "they're very slow, sir, to lay at this time of the year."

The same thing occurred on the two following nights and mornings. On the fourth morning the gardener appeared with one egg, saying:

"They'll soon begin to lay now, sir; here's one of 'em already."

"Well, gardener, I have myself laid four-and-twenty eggs in the nests, and you pretend the fowls have only laid one."

The gardener could only reply:

"Well, that is the only one they laid."

AT THE BARBER'S.

"Noxi!" shouted a barber, who had just finished a customer.

Two persons at once sprang from the seats where they had been patiently waiting, and approached the knight of the lather, and both looking ferociously and inquiringly at each other. One of them was an elderly personage, evidently from the country; the other young sprig of city breed, whose down had just begun to indicate the slow and uncertain approach of beard.

"Which of you is next?" asked the barber.

"I am," said the young man.

"No, you are not. We both entered at the same time; and, as I am the oldest, I claim the first chance. Besides, I am in a great hurry."

"Ah, old party, I see you are from the country, and of course do not know the rules of city society governing such cases as this," said the youth.

"What is the rule?"

"Simply this: Beauty goes before age—so I will take the chair. See?"

"Oh, well, that's right. Mr. Barber, shave him first. He has got the best of me by that city rule of his; and, come to think of it, he is right according to the rule where I come from."

"Indeed! What is the rule where you come from, old party?" asked the young fellow, as he fixed himself comfortably in the barber's chair.

"Well, young man, the rule up my way is that we always keep the hogs ahead of us. So you can go ahead, barber; it's all right," said he, taking up a paper and sitting down to read.

STATISTICS.

THE POPULATION OF AUSTRIA.—The Austrian Statistical Commission has published a report on the population, etc., of Austria, exclusive of Hungary, in the year 1873. From this report it appears that in 1869 the population was 20,210,000; in 1870, 20,330,000; in 1871, 20,350,000; in 1872, 20,720,000, and in 1873, 20,970,000. The male population has increased since 1869 from 9,810,000 to 10,200,000, and the female population from 10,400,000 to 10,770,000. The increase per square (German) mile is 138. The most thickly populated province is Silesia (5,492 inhabitants per square mile); and the most thinly populated, Salzburg (1,177 inhabitants per square mile). The number of marriages since 1869 has been gradually diminishing—in 1869, it was 208,787; in 1872, 193,826. The first civil marriage took place in 1870, when there were nine such marriages. The diminution in the number of suchriages is accounted for by the bad harvests, and this year a considerable increase is expected.

CATS IN A WILL.—A few years ago an old lady died at Vienna, leaving her fortune, which consisted of a very considerable amount of money, to her cats. The will contained a number of codicils, setting forth how the animals were to live after the death of the testatrix, and a person residing in the environs was appointed trustee to these peculiar heirs. It was specified that the entire fortune was to remain in the Government Bank, where it was then deposited, and that the interest on the capital was to be applied in the following manner:—Half of it was to be set apart for the benefit of the cats; a quarter was to go to the trustee whose duty it was to attend to the animals; and the other quarter to a person appointed to look after the trustee. The cats were twelve in number, there being six males and six females. By the will provision is made that

in the event of the twelve cats and their descendants dying the fortune was to be divided between the trustee and guardian. It was provided in another clause that if the animals perished by the hand of a "murderer," the fortune was to pass to the poor of Moedling. All the cats died, with the exception of one male, and the guardian and trustee already thought themselves in possession of the old lady's money, when the administrator of public charity of Moedling stepped in and brought an action against them to recover the fortune, on the ground that between them they had wilfully killed the cats. The action is now pending.

A WAIF OF THE SNOW.

THE rude, sonorous Norther
Comes blustering over the hill—
The phantom footfalls of the snow
Are beating on the sill:

I heard the weird complaining
Of gaunt, storm-shaken woods,
The hoarse and fretful monstrosities
Of Deep-dell's swollen floods.

With steady, cheering lustre,
The mellow candle-light
Shines thro' the lattice, far across
The wilderness of Night:

Perchance some homeless creature,
Some wanderer of the storm,
Led by its golden clue, may find
A shelter safe and warm.

The house is strangely quiet—
No tinging baby voices
Fill up the storm's vague pauses
With chattering like the birds;

Within the silent chambers,
Along the empty hall,
No little tottering footsteps
Like broken music fall.

Among the downy pillows tucked
From cruel wind and snow,
The pretty heads of the children
Are cuddled in a row:

Across the swaying cradle
The flickering firelight gleams,
And the dimpled feet are straying
In the fairy land of dreams!

The house is strangely quiet—
The smouldering embers fall—
The ancient clock, like a weary heart,
Throbs faintly on the wall:

Far up the cavernous chimney leaps
The blaze with answering roar,
When the surly blast comes whimpering
And whining to the door.

Late grows the night—and wilder:
Tired in heart and brain,
With a homesome, soul-sick weariness,
I bend to my task again:

And now, on the clinking pane, I hear
The dash of the eddying sleet—
And vague and low, and to and fro,
The phantom footfalls beat.

Hark! in a hush of the tumult,
Some lost, belated thing
Is tapping at the casement,
With chill, storm-broken wing—

Some wanderer of the tempest,
Led by my beacon light
Across the wintry waste hath sought
A refuge for the night!

With eager haste I welcome
My small, storm-beaten guest—
A pretty frightened snow-bird,
That flutters to my breast;

And still my lonely vigil
With tolling pen I keep,
While happy bird and babies
Are nestled safe in sleep.

E. A. B.

THE custom of eating fish on Fridays and in Lent is derived from the old Pagan notion that fish was sacred to Aphrodite, the foam-born goddess, and to the Roman Venus. Hence the custom grew of eating fish on Friday, the day of Freya, and in spring, the season sacred to the goddess of love.

A MONSTER SHARK.—A monster shark has been cast ashore at Ventnor, Isle of Wight. It was first supposed to be a whale, but it is probably a basking shark (*Squalus maximus*). The extreme length from the snout to the end of the longest tail fin 28 feet 10 inches, circumference of body about 15 feet, and length of head about 6 feet 10 inches. The price asked for this magnificent fish was 30*l*.

A SINGULAR RECOVERY.—A well-known medical practitioner in Paris visited a rheumatic patient at

few nights ago, and in taking a candle to examine him set fire to the curtains, and the flames quickly spread; the doctor and the nurse seized the unfortunate patient and dragged him into the street; the firemen quickly arrived, and saved part of the premises. Wonderful to relate, the patient was restored to good health by the shock, but he has to regulate with his doctor a bill of 150,000*fr*. for damages caused by the fire.

GEMS.

He is the richest man who is content with what he has.

Make friends of none in whom you have not implicit confidence—whom you cannot trust in all places and at all seasons. The best friendship you can make is that which is based on those feelings which spring from the observance of sacred truths.

A TENDER conscience is like the apple of a man's eye—the least dust that gathers into it affects it. There is no surer and better way to know whether our consciences are dead and stupid than to observe what impressions small sins make upon them.

Would you have influence with those who look to you for guidance and instruction? Bear with you the law of kindness. Would you command their respect? Let your words, though they may inflict pain for the time, drop kindly from your lips.

If women would cultivate their minds more, they would be more companionable to intelligent men. Many a husband goes out for his evening, many a lover gets tired of his betrothed, because he finds her conversation insipid. Ladies, try not only to look pretty but to talk well also.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO BOTTLE FRUITS OF ALL SORTS.—Put perfect fruit in wide-mouthed bottles and pack as closely as possible without breaking. It is a good plan to fill up the space between cherries with red currants and raspberries. When the bottles are full place a boiler of cold water over the fire, put rags or cloths at the bottom to prevent the bottles breaking; stand them in the boiler till the water boils, then pour boiling spring water into each bottle of fruit and let them stand till cold. The fruits will absorb some of the water, which must be replaced with cold boiled water so as to have an inch of water above the fruits. Then cover the water with sweet oil and tie down with bladder. Be sure the bottles are quite clean. Cut the stalks off gooseberries, cherries and currants, so as not to break the skin of the fruits.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A FINE ART EXHIBITION will be held at the Hague in May.

THE imperfections of the diamond, and in fact of all gems, are made visible by putting them into oil of cassia, when the slightest flaw will be seen.

A NOVELTY.—A novelty in costumes is a fan, the handle of which forms a pocket-handkerchief holder. The idea is ingenious. Of course the handkerchief which issues from this holder must be rich with lace and delicately scented. Some fans have also a tiny scent bottle inserted at the bottom of the fan-handle. And thus a fan becomes handkerchief, scent bottle, and fan in one.

A NEW VOTIVE CHURCH FOR PARIS.—The French Assembly has authorized the erection on the top of Montmartre of a votive church, which will tower over all Paris, and is to cost about 10,000,000*fr*, to be raised by public subscriptions. The arbitrators have this week opened their inquiry for the acquisition of the site. This process will be completed about the 15th of April, and the property will be conveyed to the Archbishop of Paris.

A VALUABLE CASKET OF JEWELS.—Mrs. Stuart's casket of jewels was sold the other day by Messrs. Christie, Manson, and Wood for a total sum of 20,000*l*. A necklace of 48 magnificent large brilliants fetched 8,650*l*; one of emeralds and brilliants, 1,230*l*; a bracelet of large oval and two smaller oval brilliants, 770*l*; a cross of very fine ruby and six large brilliants, 970*l*; and a ruby and brilliant bracelet, 970*l*.

DR. J. E. GRAY.—The late keeper of the Zoological Department of the British Museum, Dr. Gray, died at his London residence on Sunday, the 7th ult., at the age of 75. Dr. Gray's contributions to Zoological literature were numerous, and it is by them, and by the results of his long labours at the museum, that he will best be remembered. In 1847 he read a paper before the Society on the subject of "Shells for Cameos," with the view of extending the art of cameo-cutting in this country.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. R.—We do not reply by post.
 MISS L.—The matter will be attended to.
 T. D.—The trousers merely require to be dusted with a soft cloth.
 C. C.—The lines are tolerably good. The effort might have been prolonged and better sustained.
 JAMES D.—The amended particulars are not now required.
 ALLY R. F.—The letter has been received; it is pleasant to hear you were gratified.
 A. COUNTRYMAN.—The handwriting is very legible, but it is too bold and too diffused to be very useful.
 QUEEN B.—About half-a-crown. You should apply to some bookseller near your residence.
 J. B.—You will probably obtain the information you ask for by consulting the last edition of the Medical Directory.
 W. F. L.—We cannot say. You should address the lady in a more direct manner.
 ALICE D.—It is generally considered desirable that the age of the husband should exceed that of the wife by six or seven years.
 A. FORSAKEN ONE.—As far as we know the tales you inquire for are not published in a separate form. The handwriting is very neat and good.
 E. M. W.—An inspection of the parts is necessary in order to form an opinion; you should therefore consult a surgeon.
 M. L. R.—It is unusual to contemplate a contravention of an established rule, though it is not improbable that your politely expressed wishes will receive careful consideration in the proper quarter.
 DON A.—The application does not appear inviting. The name, the distance, the expectations, all seem foreign to the spirit of this prosaic, utilitarian and practical age.
 YOUNG LADY.—We like the handwriting exceedingly. In reply to the other questions, we are sorry we have no suggestion to offer by which a widespread want can be supplied; the conditions are so very onerous.
 A. U.—Everything was in correct and proper form. Probably your disappointment may have been occasioned by the fact that in this case at the last, or notwithstanding all, "Barkis was not willing."
 A. CONSTANT READER.—A collection of shells made by a private individual is usually kept in small cabinets containing a series of drawers or shelves. Dr. J. E. Gray's "List of British Mollusca and Shells," is a work which will probably answer your purpose.
 CHARLES C.—The game referred to is simply unfinished and could not be finished owing to the conditions of time under which it was played. The expense of the table should be shared equally by both parties and then the matter should be considered ended.
 A. CONSTANT READER (Eckham).—The answers to our correspondents' letters are written within a few days from the time they are received. But occasionally through pressure upon our space the publication of the replies is necessarily delayed.
 GEORGE AND HENRY.—Some sort of foundation whereon fancy can build a superstructure should be supplied. You only give a name. Now, although the likes and dislikes of girls extend to the smallest triviality, a name included, they can hardly be expected to fall in love with only a name.
 MAUD DE VARE.—You should not too seriously pursue an ideal that has taken possession of your fancy. Having dropped a gentle hint that the attentions of a beau ideal would not be disagreeable to you, there let the effort cease. If he should not declare himself, perhaps it may so be best.
 SWEET MILDRED.—You know not what you ask. Be persuaded to abandon the way in which your letter seems to indicate you wish to tread. At your early age it should not be trodden even in company with a lover. Those who prosper in that road do so either under parental influence, or under the guardianship of some able, true, devoted and experienced friend.
 CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.—1. Telegraphy is taught in various schools, originated for that purpose, whose advertisements often appear in the daily papers. Persons desirous to learn must of course be able to read and write, but beyond that the payment of the fees is the principal qualification for admission to the school. 2. The gentleman's address can be found in the London Directory.
 VULCAN.—The first day of spring is usually considered to be the fourteenth of February. All that can be said about the apparent contradiction given to this date by the severity of the present season is, that it occasionally happens that a winter temperature extends to the commencement of spring, notwithstanding the

lengthening of the days and the increasing power of the sun.

E. A. T.—We do not answer by letter. Your notion on that subject is on the whole correct. Our correspondents can command such services as we are able to render them, free of charge. For the rest, we can only help you in a quiet, harmless way to take an elementary, perhaps your first step. The reaping is your own affair. Whether it may be your lot to spend a long and possibly a weary time in pursuit of the object of your desire or whether the fruit you would gather is nearly ripe—we cannot tell.

SARPH.—1. Note-paper can be performed by the addition of perfume to the writing-case or box in which the paper is kept. You should select the perfume you yourself prefer, choosing of course a powdered perfume. 2. You should believe your lover in preference to any mere gossip current about him. "Love's best habit is in seeming trust." 3. The handwriting is very neat. If it were regarded as a test of character, what could be said about feigned and disguised writing? Character has many sides and indications, of which the handwriting is but one, and judges of character do not or ought not to jump to conclusions.

MARY STUART.—1. Use warm water, soap, and a clean flannel. For ladies present at a dinner party it is the custom to wear gloves while they are in the drawing-room. 3. The lady is of course at liberty to act in the manner described; it would intimate to the gentleman that his presence was very welcome. 4. The winged glasses are placed at the guest's right hand; all likely to be used at dinner are placed at the same time; there is a remove for dessert. Sherry is usually taken with fish. 5. At a large party the hostess frequently sits at the side of the table, faced on the other side by her best friend.

PARTING.

Come, let us part with lightsome heart,
 Nor breathe one sighing sigh;
 To think that wings of rainbow plume
 So soon should leave to fly.
 We scarcely like the chimera to strike
 That toll of pleasure's flight;
 But friendship's chain, when severed thus,
 Is sure to rattle.
 Then why not we as merry be,
 Though this song be the last.
 Believing other hours will come
 As bright as those just past?

The moments fled, like violets dead,
 Shall never lose their power;
 For grateful perfume ever mingles
 The memory's withered flower.
 The sailor's lay, in peaceful bay,
 With gladsome mirth rings out;
 But when the heavy anchor's weighed
 He gives as blithe about.
 Then why not we as merry be,
 In this our parting strain;
 And trust, as gallant sailors do,
 To make the port again?

E. C.

FORGET-ME-NOT.—We did not forget you. The notice of the photograph duly appeared on this page and your other requests were also complied with. We remember very well the impression made by a contemplation of your handwriting and our attempt to characterize a style in which boldness and elegance are combined in a remarkable manner; a philosopher of course would not be put off his guard even by a small circumstance, and would therefore have the maxim "appearances are deceptive" ever present to his mind, but a more ardent and impressionable and everyday sort of person would, through the perusal of these fascinating epistles, perhaps stand in danger of losing his head and what he has left of that which passes by the name of heart. If such a catastrophe should happen, Mr. Nameless will be the first person who has been captured by a letter.

FAIR ASIAN ON EASTERN.—1. The two principal rivers in India—so your question runs—are the Indus and the Ganges—the Brahmaputra, being united with the latter at some points, is sometimes popularly spoken of as the Ganges. Geographers, however, write of the three gigantic rivers of India, namely, the Indus, the Ganges, and the Brahmaputra. The Indus is fed by streams from the lofty region of Ladak, from the western portion of the Tibetan plateau, and from the southern slopes of the Himalaya as far east as the Peak of Jumnotri. These streams unite at a point near the southern extremity of the Sulaiman mountains, after which the Indus receives no tributaries of any importance in the rest of its course. Its total length is 1,900 geographical miles, and its basin extends over 312,000 square geographical miles. The Indus flows into the Arabian Sea, which communicates with the Indian Ocean. The Ganges receives by far the greater portion of its waters from the Himalaya range from Jumnotri to the Lachal Pass, near Darjeeling, east of which all the waters from those mountains flow to join the Brahmaputra. In the western part of the upper course of the Ganges, its branches spread out like a fan and collect not only the waters of the south Himalaya but those of a great basin between the Aravalli, the Vindhya and the Kymor ranges of mountains, forming the plateau of Malwa. In fact, the Ganges may be considered as resulting from the union of "nineteen or twenty large rivers, of which twelve are larger than the Rhine (Chomerville)." The upper course of the Brahmaputra is but little known, and the wandering of its branches among the mountains east and north of Assam belong rather to speculation than to knowledge. The Ganges and the Brahmaputra drain a joint area of 432,000 square geographical miles, but the latter is by far the larger stream, its minimum delivery of water being 150,000 cubic feet per second (Wilcock) against 36,000 delivered by the Ganges. The Brahmaputra and Ganges unite in two deltas, which in their prolongation seaward have met and overlapped. They flow into the Bay of Bengal, which communicates with the Indian Ocean. 2. The Alps is the highest, most extensive and most complex of the mountain systems in Europe. It connects itself with the Pyrenees through the mountain districts of France west of the Rhone—the Cevennes, the Fuy, and the Vosges mountains. East of

the Rhone the Dauphiné and Grenoble mountains, some times called the Cottian Alps, connect themselves with the great system of the Pyrene Alps. Of these latter there are two principal distinct chains, namely: first, the Saradine Alps including Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa, and Mont Corvin; and, second, the Bernese chain, including the Finsteraarhorn and the Jungfrau. These unite at St. Gothard, from which, spreading eastward, extends a wilderness of lofty peaks and ridges through the Grisons and Tyrol to the Glockner, whence more branches ramify in various directions; the chain of the Boch Alps extending N. E. towards Vienna, and other chains proceeding E. and S. E. accompanying the coast line of the Adriatic under the names of the Julian, Carnic, and Dinario Alps, from which again part off many ramifications, covering the whole region south of the Danube to the utmost confines of Europe.

BESSIE, nineteen, brown eyes and hair, musical, and fond of home. Respondent must be fair, about twenty-three; naval officer preferred.
 TAZIE, seventeen, fair hair, blue eyes, fond of home, and musical. Respondent must be dark, about twenty-two; naval officer preferred.

LOUISE KATE, seventeen, considered handsome, would like to correspond with a dark young man; midshipman preferred.
 FANNIE C., twenty-two, medium height, very fair, brown eyes, very domesticated, would like to correspond with a dark young man, who is steady and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

MORT, eighteen, tall, fair, laughing blue eyes, golden brown hair, pretty good singer, and fond of home, would like to correspond with a young gentleman, about twenty-four, who is good looking and tall; an officer in the Royal Navy preferred.

MAUDE S. wishes to meet with a husband, dark, and about twenty-four. She is of fair complexion, blue eyes, and light hair, rather tall, eighteen, good musician, and would make a loving wife to a steady and good-tempered young man.

ADA M. would like to correspond with a fair and good looking gentleman, about twenty-five, a sea captain preferred. She is good looking, has a dark complexion, is domesticated, fond of home, and feels she would make a loving wife.

ASH BECKER, a stoker in H. M. service, would like to correspond with a young lady. He is twenty-six, 5ft. 6in., dark complexion, good looking and fond of home. Respondent must be dark, about twenty-two or twenty-three, fond of home, and able to love a stoker.

HANNAH MASSER, twenty-two, a stoker in H. M. service, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about nineteen or twenty, fair, passable in looks, fond of home, and not too tall.

JESSIE wishes to correspond with a gentleman with a view to marriage; she is twenty-one, considered good looking by her friends, medium height, dark complexion, hazel eyes, industrious disposition, and fond of children, with an income of one hundred per annum.

PATRICIA FUZZ BAZ, twenty-five, 5ft. 6in., fair, considered good looking by his topmates, a stoker in H. M. service, wishes to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about twenty-two, fair, not too tall, and one that can love a sailor.

SHAMOCK, stoker in H. M. service, wishes to correspond with a dark young lady about nineteen, with a view to matrimony. He is 5ft. 6in., twenty, dark, good looking, loving disposition. Respondent must be dark, loving, and fond of home and music. A Catholic preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

S. A. S. is responded to by—"J. S.," twenty-six, 5ft. 6in.; a seaman in the Royal Navy.
 BONNIE HILL by—"A Lincolnshire Girl," nineteen, domesticated. She thinks she would make him a loving wife; and by—"Lonely Annie," twenty; she is very good looking and thinks she would suit him in every way.

HAPPY GEORGE by—"Mabel," twenty, tall, dark brown hair and eyes, fair, considered very good looking by her friends, thoroughly domesticated and fond of home and children; and by—"Augusta," nineteen, dark hair and eyes, domesticated and musical, and will endeavour to make him more happy; and by—"Happy Little," twenty, tall, dark hair and eyes, very fond of home, and has some money; and by—"Light Heart," who think she is all he requires. He would find her a happy and loving partner; and by—"Polly," twenty-one, considered good looking, medium height, and thinks she would suit him.

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